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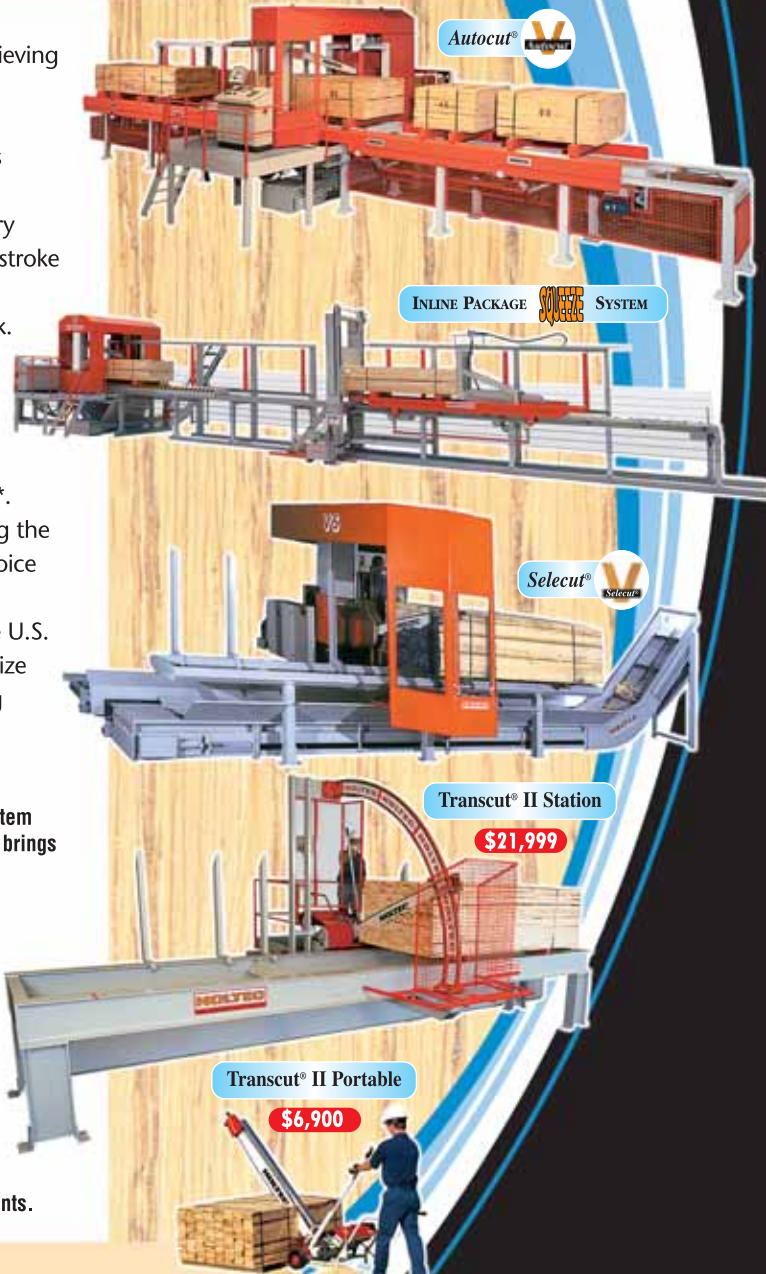
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Photo courtesy of Allen Erickson, Cal-Asia Truss, Concord, CA.

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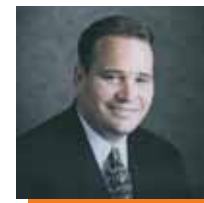
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## Editor's Message

### Immigration Tops List of Industry's Legislative Issues

by Don Groom

Immigration is top of mind for everyone these days, and the construction industry is no exception.

You don't have to look any farther than the nightly news or the newspaper to know that immigration is on just about everyone's minds these days. At the time this was written, proposed legislation ranged from modernization of the current system to sweeping changes on how the law looks at those currently living illegally in this country or hoping to immigrate to the U.S. It's difficult to say at this point which of the many proposals may become law, but one thing is certain—new legislation will have a major impact on American business. While everyone has—and is entitled to—their own opinion, our industry supports immigration reform that emphasizes security while also recognizing manufacturers' workforce needs.

In the midst of a nationwide manufacturing and building construction labor shortage that shows no sign of letting up or any near-term remedy, immigration is a major issue for our industry and the construction industry overall. The demand for structural building components in all markets continues to grow, and we need to be able to hire skilled and productive workers to meet this marketplace demand. At a time when young workers are not entering these jobs in large enough numbers to fill current openings, immigrant populations play a vital role in helping meet our workforce demand—from entry-level workers to assembly line workers to technical staff. These employees do much more than fill a short-term labor shortage; they're a credit to the industry and can reap the benefits through the many career opportunities available in the industry today.

**Now is the time for the structural building components industry to make our voice heard. Join the effort by getting involved politically and start making a difference in your community.**

As national immigration policy evolves, there's no doubt that lawmakers' efforts to secure our nation's borders is a top priority that our industry should support. But it's important to understand how national policy could also have a drastic impact on American business. At times, the current laws already pose challenges to businesses' human resource (HR) departments.

That's why the structural building components industry supports immigration reform by streamlining current immigration programs. Likewise, the creation of employment-based programs and a guest-worker or expanded visa program could help component manufacturers hire foreign nationals and meet the growing workforce demand. Component manufacturers also need any new legislation to be manageable from an HR perspective.

### at a glance

- Our industry supports immigration reform that emphasizes security while also recognizing manufacturers' workforce needs.
- Immigrant populations play a vital role in helping meet our workforce demand.
- There is a lot we can do on the local legislative front. Get involved on the state and local district level by making contacts with your lawmakers.

Policy that would impose a penalty on companies who unknowingly hire an illegal immigrant would be a major blow to businesses and create an HR nightmare in trying to track down and double- and triple-check every worker's documentation. This is all the more reason why our industry supports additional funding for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to increase border security, conduct more extensive criminal and background checks on visa applicants, and identify undocumented workers in the U.S. Our industry also supports Congress appropriating funds to effectively track foreign workers and introduce counterfeit-resistant work

Continued on page 8

## Editor's Message

Continued from page 7

authorization cards so employers don't take on unknown risk when hiring immigrant workers.

The timeliness of the immigration debate and the far-reaching effects that new polices could have on component manufacturers proves how vital it is for each and every one of us to get involved politically. The Legislative Conference is a wonderful opportunity for the industry to gather in Washington, DC to meet with members of Congress and their staffs, as well as officials from federal agencies. There's also much we can do locally in our own communities. Get involved on the state and local district level by making contacts with your lawmakers and their staffs. There's no better way to share our industry's story than to tell it first-hand.

Contacting your Senator or Congressperson may sound daunting at first, but WTCA offers many tools to help you get involved in legislative advocacy. In addition to the many resources on [www.sbcleg.com](http://www.sbcleg.com), WTCA can provide you with talking points, state maps and industry statistics, all of which will help you break the ice. WTCA can even schedule meetings with lawmakers for you. When a legislative matter of importance to our industry arises, WTCA provides templates to help component manufacturers write letters to their lawmakers. Whether you're new to legislative advocacy or a pro, your trade association offers the tools to make the process simple and help you make the most of your time and effort.

Now is the time for the structural building components industry to make our voice heard. Join the effort by getting involved politically and start making a difference in your community. It will benefit your company as well as the entire industry. **SBC**

*SBC Magazine encourages the participation of its readers in developing content for future issues. Do you have an article idea for a future issue or a topic that you would like to see covered? Email your thoughts and ideas to [editor@sbcmag.info](mailto:editor@sbcmag.info).*

## correction:

The following WTCA member was missing from the annual listing that ran in the April 2006 issue:

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We apologize for the oversight. **SBC**

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# Publisher's Message

## Getting Back to Basics

by Libby Maurer

One is not necessarily the loneliest number when it comes to voicing the concerns that impact your business and workforce.

Someone recently reminded me of an allegedly inspiring phrase I first learned at leadership camp: "If It Is To Be, It Is To Be Me." At the time, I was turned off by its simplicity, and too jaded to believe it. But years later, I admit that those ten two-letter words hold more relevance than I ever thought. So often we focus on the power of working together to overcome a challenge. While teamwork serves a very important function, let's never forget that the success of a team is often driven by the power of one. Taken in the context of the legislative policy issues that our industry faces, *one* is certainly better than *none*.

And that's just why the WTCA Legislation Conference returned to Washington, DC for its sixth straight year; like it or not, one person does make a difference. This time around, some sixty component manufacturers descended on the nation's capital with immigration reform at the tops their agendas. The theme of this year's conference, "Building Relationships," was carried out through member visits with their lawmakers and contacts at key government agencies. The conference included a reception and dinner each evening that featured informative speakers on key issues affecting our industry. Plus, this year attendees enjoyed a private tour of the White House. To get all of the details, turn to page 41 for a full recap and talking points on the key issues that were covered this year.

At one point in your career, you may have been approached by a prospective buyer interested in your business. After the excitement and anxiety of the prospect of a buy-out wore off, did you find yourself wishing for a mentor to help make some difficult decisions? Look no further: mergers and acquisitions (M&A) attorney Doug Cerny provides some much needed counsel to manufacturers who are in the midst of this type of transaction. Even if you don't fall into this category, this four-part series is one to keep on your bookshelf for future use. Get started on page 64, as Cerny covers "How to Prepare for Sale."

When it came to a potentially devastating building labeling bill being considered by the Maine legislature earlier this year, WTCA's Northeast Chapter quickly assembled a team (including staff) to represent the industry's voice on the issue. Find out about the strategy that eventually led them to victory, and why communication and a consistent message on issues similar to this are so important.

No one said the solution to the nation's workforce shortage would be a quick fix. So why not strike up a relationship with a local community college or high school? Read about how three manufacturers have taken matters into their own hands, and have established reliable outlets for trained job candidates on page 36.

They're long, boring, wordy. But policies (WTCA policies in particular) exist for good reason. Starting on page 68, outside legal counsel Kent Pagel explains that the policy "Component Design and Manufacturing" is ultimately in place to protect component manufacturers. He also explains the role of a "truss broker" and why its business model may cause your liability to skyrocket if you choose to work with one.

We hope you find this issue chock full of information that will help you to make a difference in your company, marketplace and chapter. Many thanks to our loyal advertisers—their support helps to make *SBC* legislative work possible. *SBC*

### at a glance

- ❑ This issue of *SBC Magazine* features articles about legal and legislative topics.
- ❑ The Sixth Annual WTCA Legislative Conference took place in Washington, DC on May 10-12.
- ❑ Some of this issue's other features include: how to prepare yourself and your company for a buy-out, why you should think twice about selling product through a truss broker and a victory surrounding a building labeling issue.



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by WTCA Staff

There are many options for bracing the webs of different truss types.

**S**tress-rated lumber or boards attached with their long dimension at right angles to the web member of a truss are often considered the standard means of “bracing” the web member to prevent buckling under load. Often referred to as lateral bracing (LB) or continuous lateral bracing (CLB), a basic requirement when applying this type of lateral restraint is that the web member that requires bracing “lines up” with the web members of adjacent trusses that also require restraint. The complexities of most roof systems built today require a myriad of different truss configurations, resulting in very few trusses having the same web pattern. This can lead to confusion with installers as to how to “brace” the webs.

### Question

*I've got a residential roof with 46 different truss types. Several of the Truss Design Drawings show webs that need bracing and call out a lumber lateral brace. How am I supposed to brace the webs when there are only a few cases where I have more than one or two of the same truss web configuration?*

### Answer

There are many different ways to brace or restrain the web members in a truss. As long as there are at least two adjacent trusses with the same or similar web configurations, lateral restraint (i.e., lateral bracing) methods can be used. These methods typically include the use of lateral members in combination with diagonal bracing (DB). The lateral members are installed to reduce the buckling length of the web(s), but must be restrained laterally to prevent the webs to which they are attached from buckling together in the same direction. Properly installed DB provides the restraint and transfers the forces from the laterals to the roof and ceiling diaphragms.

For groups of at least three trusses, attach the lateral “brace” at the locations shown on the Truss Design Drawing together with a DB on the opposite side of the webs at an angle to the lateral (see Figure 1). Be sure to extend the DB from the top chord of the first truss to the bottom chord of the last truss, attaching the DB to each web that it crosses. This provides rigidity that prevents the webs from displacing laterally. For long continuous runs of lateral bracing, DB should be installed at no more than 20-foot intervals, unless a closer spacing is specified by the Registered Design Professional/Building Designer.

If there are only two adjacent trusses in which the webs align, the single DB must be attached to each web and the lateral brace. One way to accomplish this is to install the DB on the opposite side that the lateral brace is attached. Attach the DB near the top of the web of the first truss and near the bottom of the web of the second truss. Install dimension lumber blocking, of the same depth as the webs, directly behind the lateral brace and attach the blocking to both the lateral and the diagonal brace (see Figure 2).

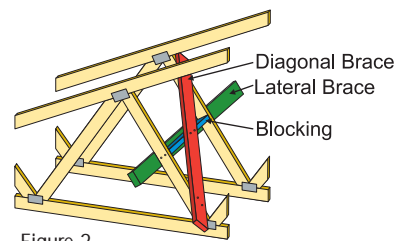


Figure 2.

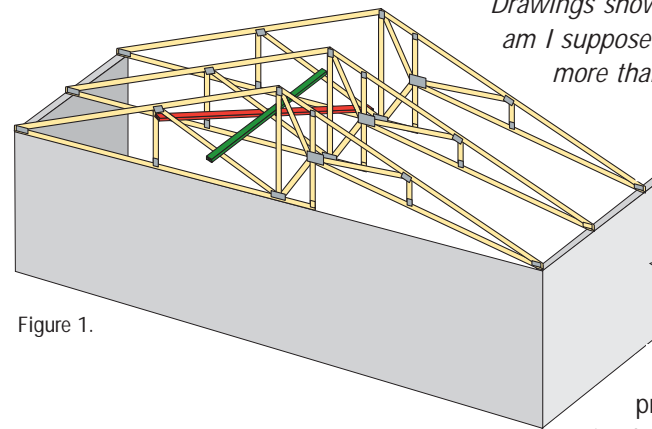


Figure 1.

### at a glance

- ❑ Without the diagonal brace, the only thing the lateral member(s) ensures is that the webs to which they are attached will behave as a unit and buckle together in the same direction if and/or when the buckling load is reached.
- ❑ The single diagonal brace and web reinforcement options satisfy the need for bracing individual trusses and truss members, but not the stability bracing of the entire building system.
- ❑ BCSI-B3 Web Member Permanent Bracing/Web Reinforcement provides industry recommendations and methods for restraining web members against buckling.

When each adjacent truss is of a different configuration so that none of the webs requiring bracing align, web bracing can be accomplished by installing either a single diagonal brace or web reinforcement. A single diagonal brace, without a lateral brace, can be used to provide lateral restraint by attaching the diagonal near the mid-span of the web. The ends of the diagonal must be cut to fit snugly against the top and bottom chords of the adjacent trusses and toe-nailed to each (see Figure 3). (**Note:** The single diagonal brace works only in cases in which the web requires only one brace.)

Web reinforcement can also be used and, in many cases, is a more efficient and economical option. Web reinforcement is accomplished by attaching a piece of stress-rated lumber to the web, thereby increasing its cross-section. The reinforcement can be added to the edge of the web to form a “T-” or “L-brace,” or may be added to the face of the web (i.e., scab). Proprietary metal reinforcement in the shape of a “Z” is also available, and some truss manufacturers will “build” individual member reinforcement into the truss by plating an additional piece of lumber to the edge of the web in a “stacked” configuration (see Figure 4). Lumber reinforcement must be a single piece at least 90 percent of the length of the web.

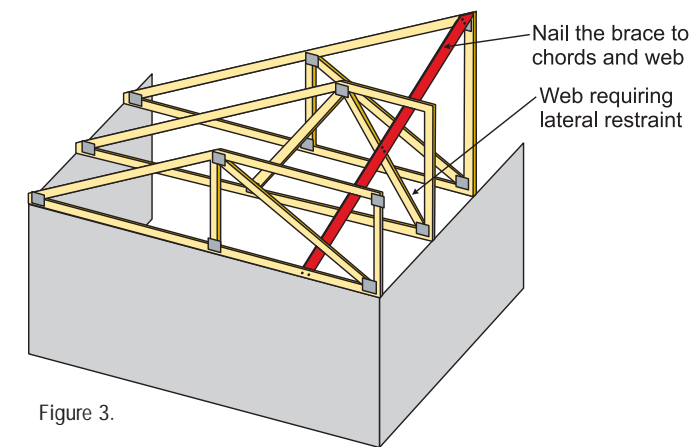


Figure 3.

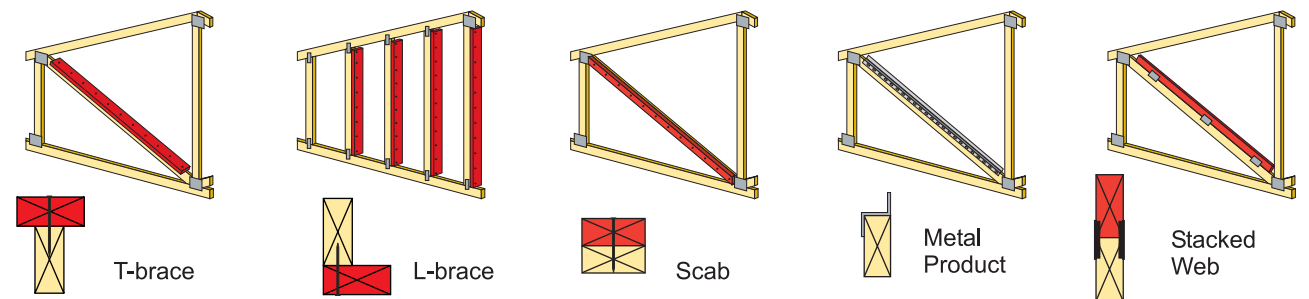
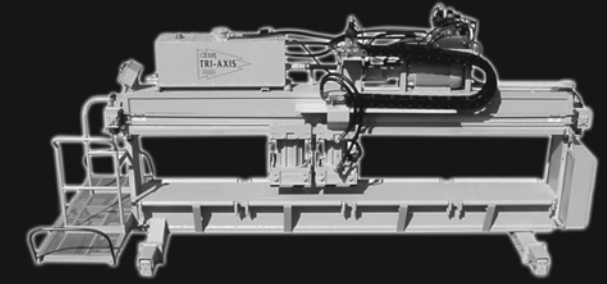


Figure 4.

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ment must be a single piece at least 90 percent of the length of the web.

The single diagonal brace and web reinforcement options satisfy the bracing needs for individual trusses and truss members, but not the stability bracing of the entire building system. Building system bracing design is the responsibility of the Registered Design Professional.

BCSI-B3, *Web Member Permanent Bracing/Web Reinforcement*, a publication jointly produced by WTCA and the Truss Plate Institute (TPI), provides general industry recommendations and methods for restraining web members against buckling. WTCA’s *Tech Note “T-DissimilarWebs06, Bracing Webs in Trusses that have Dissimilar Configurations,”* also provides information. Both of these publications can be viewed at [www.sbcindustry.com/technotes.php](http://www.sbcindustry.com/technotes.php). Standard details for bracing individual truss web members may also be available from the Truss Designer. **SBC**

*To pose a question for this column, call the WTCA technical department at 608/274-4849 or email [technicalqa@sbcmag.info](mailto:technicalqa@sbcmag.info).*

# SUPERIOR LOAD DISTRIBUTION & PRODUCT DESIGN: IT'S WHAT SETS US APART.

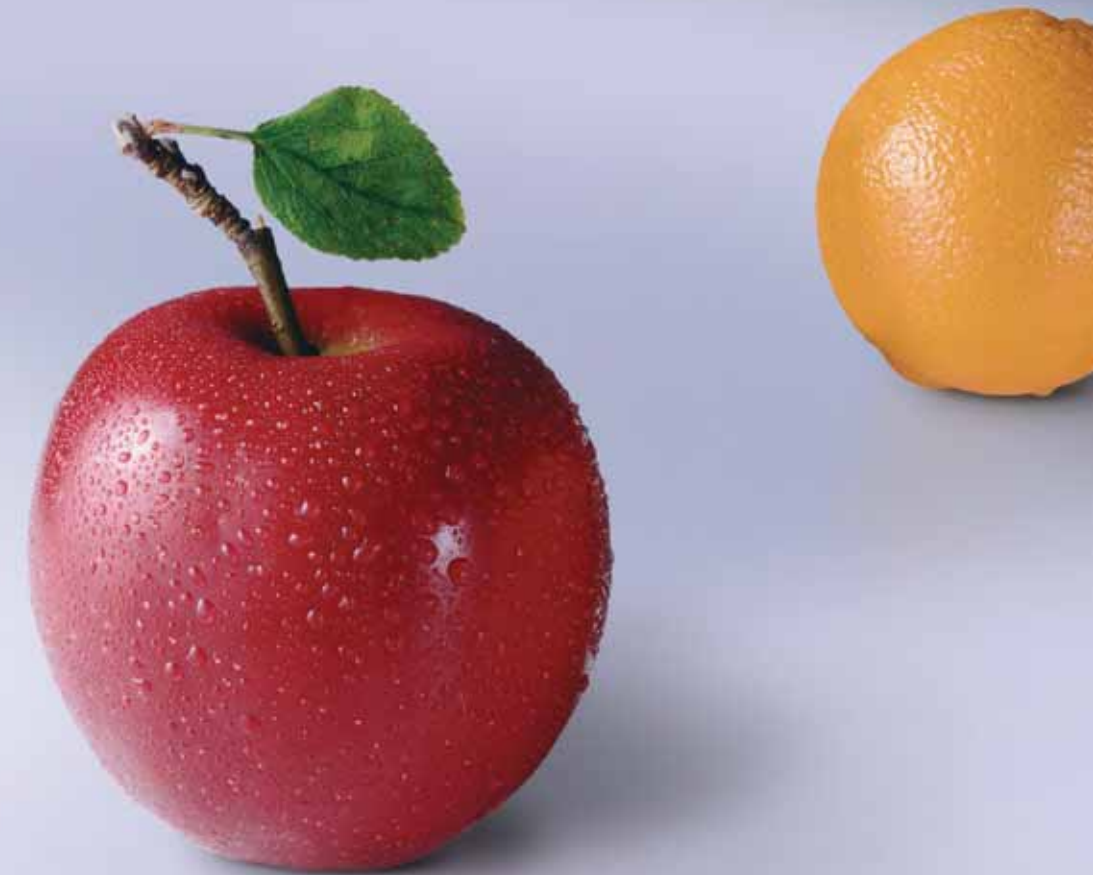
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# Safety Scene

## When the Bee Stings...

### Bugs: A Cause for Concern on the Job

by Molly E. Butz

Don't dismiss those pesky flying insects and creepy crawlers; learn about the dangers they can pose and educate those around you.

It may be one of those things you only think about when you're packing your bags for a wilderness adventure, but animals can be a workplace safety hazard, too. No, you probably won't encounter a grizzly bear fishing wood scraps out of your garbage dumpster, but there are a host of insects and spiders that can unexpectedly attack and leave you itchy, sore or even worse.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), insects and arachnids inflicted 36,100 nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses between 1992 and 1997. Both indoor and outdoor workers can be victims of random insect and arachnid encounters. It's important to understand which bugs pose a threat in your region, what "symptoms" to look for, and when it's time to go to the emergency room.

#### Who & Where

There are a large number of insects and arachnids that can inflict painful and potentially dangerous bites or stings. Bees, wasps and hornets are common in all areas of the United States and tend to be more active during the warmer months of the year. And virtually no region is exempt from at least one of a handful of venomous spiders including Black Widow, Brown Recluse and Hobo spiders. In the southwest, the sting of a scorpion can pack a nasty punch; and in the southeast, fire ants are becoming increasingly common. They may be small, but they can cause serious injury.

In addition, workers in most regions are also threatened by minor bites from pesky pests including mosquitoes, horseflies, deerflies, black flies and ticks, which can also carry more serious diseases such as Lyme Disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. From tiny, annoying bites to sore, uncomfortable stings, every insect incident is worth assessing.

#### Signs & Symptoms

Nothing can predict what will happen if a bite or sting occurs, and each person's body will react differently. Even fairly harmless insects and spiders can have a tremendous effect on a person who is highly sensitive or allergic to the offending pest. Here are a few signs and symptoms to look for if you suspect a bite or sting:

- Red and/or swollen bump(s)
- Itching
- Hives
- Open sores (generally due to scratching—careful, these can get infected!)
- Anaphylaxis (a serious allergic reaction that can include difficulty breathing, dizziness, nausea, diarrhea, fever, muscle spasms or loss of consciousness)
- Angioedema (a different allergic reaction that causes swelling throughout the body, especially the face, lips and eye area)

Spider bites often cause a small amount of pain, redness, itching and swelling that lasts only a couple of days. Often, spider bites are even too small to be detected. However, some of the more venomous spiders listed above can cause a host of uncomfortable symptoms. If you think you may have been bit, here are some things to look for:

- A target or bull's-eye shaped wound
- Severe muscle pain and cramps
- Weakness
- Sweating
- Headache
- Itching
- Nausea and vomiting
- Difficulty breathing
- Pain or burning
- A blister that breaks open leaving an ulcer
- A slow-healing wound

#### Treatment

Most minor bites and stings can be treated at home, and the site of the bite will typically go away within a week. Keeping the area clean will help the healing process. If the swelling is uncomfortable, an ice pack can be applied for ten minutes at a time. And an over-the-counter antihistamine (e.g., Benadryl) can be taken to reduce the itchiness. If any of the symptoms get worse, persist for more than seven days, or you acquire more symptoms along the way, it's probably in your best interest to see your doctor.

Anaphylaxis is an extremely dangerous reaction to a bug bite or sting, and although various bites may necessitate medical attention, anaphylaxis can be fatal and MUST be treated immediately. If you notice any of the symptoms of anaphylaxis, notify emergency personnel right away. (If you KNOW that you have a serious allergy, arrange to have an emergency epinephrine kit with you at all times and teach your family and friends how to use it in case you are unable to. See sidebar for more details.)

Continued on page 18

# epinephrine:

An epinephrine kit is one of several syringe kits (Epipen, Anakit or Anaguard) that contain a small, regulated dose of adrenaline (epinephrine). Adrenaline is a quick-acting hormone that the human body produces when presented with an emergency. It's the hormone that makes your heart beat rapidly and feel jittery while giving you the familiar feeling of ultra-alertness when you get jolted into a panic situation. However, adrenaline also works against the effects of anaphylaxis. You can inject it yourself, or have a companion inject it for you, and the kit can be prescribed by a doctor if you have experienced anaphylaxis in the past because of bee venom or any of a number of other triggers.

#### at a glance

- ❑ There are a host of insects and spiders that can unexpectedly attack and leave you itchy, sore or even worse.
- ❑ Insects and arachnids inflicted 36,100 nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses on workers from 1992 to 1997.
- ❑ Anaphylaxis is an extremely dangerous reaction to a bug bite or sting, can be fatal and MUST be treated immediately.

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Nothing can predict what will happen if a bite or sting occurs, and each person's body will react differently.

### Safety Scene

Continued from page 17

Spider bites may also require visiting your doctor, but generally the spiders found in the United States will not give a fatal bite to a healthy adult. Occasionally, the symptoms can be severe, but in most cases, keeping the wounded area clean and treating the symptoms is the only first aid that will be necessary. If muscle cramping, severe pain or shortness of breath occur as a result of the spider bite, medical attention is recommended.



### Bite & Sting Prevention

There is no hard and fast way to absolutely prevent a bite or sting, but there are some "best practices" that will help you avoid an incident:

- Don't intentionally provoke insects. An angry hive of bees is highly likely to sting, sting, sting.
- Avoid perfumes, colognes and strongly scented deodorants which may attract or annoy insects.
- Use insect repellent when appropriate.
- Wear clothing suitable to your job and the environment and try to avoid very dark colors and large, bold or floral patterns.
- Be careful with sugary food and liquids, because they will attract bugs.

Insects and arachnids can be a serious threat to component manufacturer employees, but with a little common sense and a little bit of luck, you can avoid a critter calamity! **SBC**

To pose a question for this column or to learn more about WTCA's Operation Safety Program, contact WTCA Staff at 608/274-4849, email [wtca@sbccindustry.com](mailto:wtca@sbccindustry.com), or view the Operation Safety demonstration online at [www.wtcalco.com](http://www.wtcalco.com).

### sources:

- *Insect Bites and Stings*, University of Maryland Medical Center.
- *Are Animals Occupational Hazards*, Dino Drudi, Compensation and Working Conditions, Fall 2000.
- *Spider Bites*, <http://www.calpoison.org/public/spiders.html>.

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# Economic Environment

## Shifting Markets Create Opportunities for Diversified Building Material Suppliers

by Al Schuler

With single-family housing starts expected to pull back in 2006 and 2007, consider opportunities in other markets, whether you use wood, steel, concrete or other materials.

Since the new millennium began, residential construction has carried the U.S. economy. Record low mortgage rates, innovative financing, a global savings glut and favorable demographics have helped drive housing markets in recent years. And housing strength has been good for most building materials (see *SBC*, March 2006). However, Figure 1 shows that residential growth has been uneven: the fastest growth has been in single-family followed by renovation markets while multi-family remained relatively flat. During this period, non-residential (NR) construction markets have not performed well.

However, that is expected to change as rising interest rates and high home prices are expected to slow down single-family markets. Because single-family construction accounts for two-thirds of residential expenditures, NAHB expects residential fixed investment (RFI)—dollar value of construction put in place including single-family, multi-family, improvements and manufactured home shipments—to contract over the next two years. This reduction is substantial because RFI averaged almost nine percent annual growth from 2003 to 2005. Therefore, market diversification may be a sound strategy because most analysts expect construction markets to reverse course over the next two years, with solid growth in non-residential expenditures while spending growth on remodeling continues. This will help to cushion the moderation in single-family activity. Manufacturing/industrial markets are expected to improve over the next two years due to the weakening dollar, productivity improvement and a strengthening world economy.

In addition, strong and steady public works combined with rebounding non-residential building markets will help to offset the downturn in new residential construction. Historically, the wood products industry has depended more on the residential market, while non-wood construction materials like steel and concrete have focused on non-residential construction markets. In this issue, we are suggesting that diversification is a good business strategy for component manufacturers whether they be wood based or non-wood based.

### Market Outlook for the "Other Markets"

Table 1 on page 22 shows the expected reversal in 2006 construction markets between residential and non-residential with residential expenditures expected to fall by 0.5 percent, while non-residential building expenditures grow by eight percent and non-building construction expenditures by six percent. Through the first quarter of the year compared with same quarter in 2005, the "Year to Date Construction Contract Value" from McGraw-Hill shows total construction up eight percent, led by non-residential building up 16 percent; non-building construction up five percent; and residential building up six percent. Looking further at Table 1, we can see where the more active growth will be in non-residential building markets—office buildings, hotels and motels, other commercial and manufacturing. This turnaround is being driven in large part by the strength in the manufacturing sector (see Figure 2) and the overall strength in the economy.

There are opportunities for innovative component manufacturers to expand their business in steel, concrete and other non-wood materials along with creative use

Continued on page 22

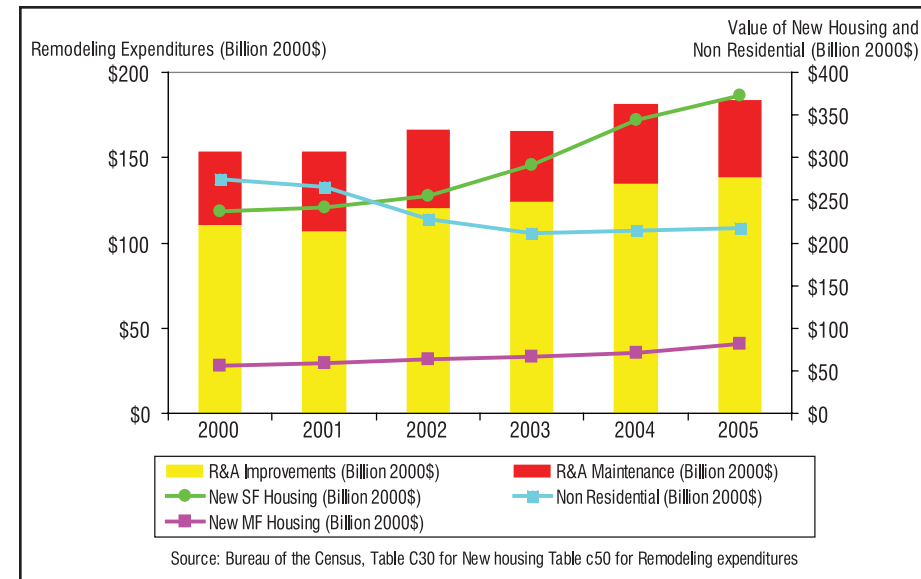


Figure 1. Private Construction Expenditures: Single-family has been the star in construction markets for the past decade.

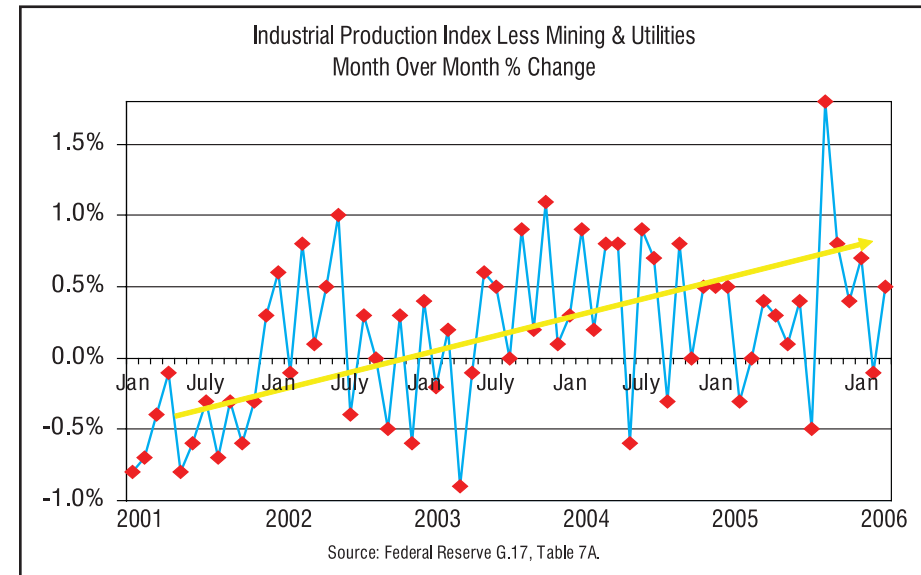


Figure 2. Manufacturing activity continues to gather strength.

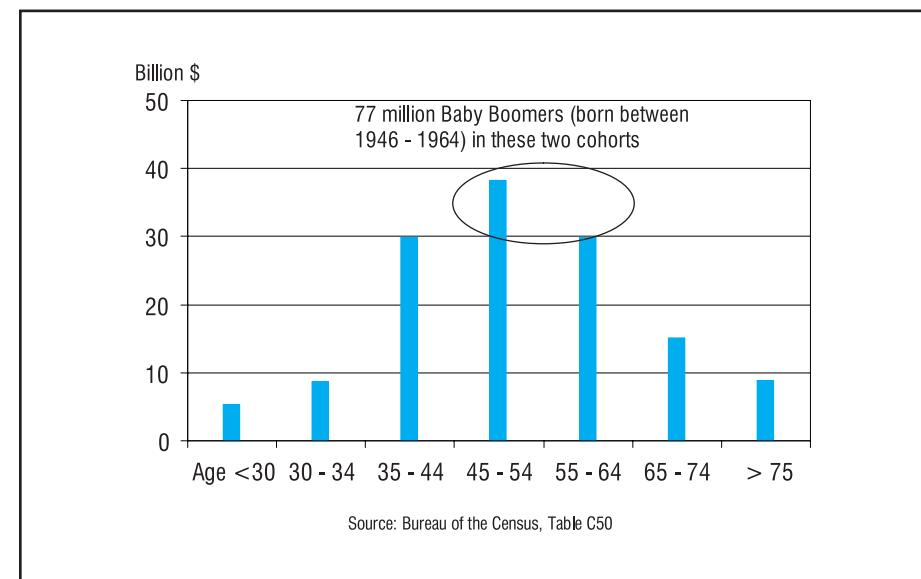


Figure 3. Remodeling Expenditures by Age in 2004: Strong remodeling markets for another decade.

### at a glance

- NAHB expects residential fixed investment (RFI) to contract over the next two years.
- Perhaps it is time to diversify: less focus on new residential construction and more focus on remodeling, industrial markets, and non-residential construction.
- To do this, consider getting closer to the end user.

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## Economic Environment

Continued from page 20

of wood. However, higher energy costs and strong demand are driving inflation in construction costs. Construction managers will be looking for help from their building material suppliers in containing costs. For example, structural steel prices have vacillated between \$525/ton and \$600/ton for the past 30 months after increasing 40 percent in the first quarter of 2004. Higher energy prices will impact some building materials more than others and with oil prices expected to remain near \$60 per barrel throughout 2006, affected industries will need to develop innovative ways to contain building materials cost inflation. In addition, union wage settlements averaged almost four percent in 2005. Through April 2006, McGraw-Hill material costs indexes are up as follows: all materials up 3.3 percent; cement up 7.3 percent; steel up 8.8 percent; and lumber down 5.5 percent.

### Remodeling Markets

Another opportunity is the remodeling market, particularly the improvement category (as opposed to maintenance). The outlook for remodeling is very good based on demographics and the age of the housing stock. Currently, there are about 120 million housing units with a median age of 33 years and nearly 30 percent of these homes are at least 50 years old. In all, 77 million "baby boomers" will spend about \$70 billion annually on remodeling projects (see Figure 3 on page 21). In fact, for at least another decade, the largest age cohort in the U.S. population will reach their peak years with respect to remodeling spending.

### Summary

What does all this mean for you? Perhaps it is time to diversify: less focus on new residential construction and more focus on remodeling, industrial markets, and non-residential construction. In this way, you might distance yourself from the boom and bust cycles and reduce volatility with your cash flow. Rarely are these markets on the same cycle with respect to new housing.

How should you focus on these markets? That is a topic for a future *SBC* article, but here are several points to consider. For each of these markets, getting closer to the end user is more critical than with new housing, where commodity products (and codes and standards) are the norm. However, you can't take homebuilders for granted either as they are

Type of construction	2005	2006 (Forecast)	% change
<b>Total construction</b>	<b>636,700</b>	<b>654,250</b>	<b>+ 2.8%</b>
Residential	367,575	365,600	- 0.5%
SF	306,200	301,625	- 1.5%
MF	61,375	63,975	+ 4.2%
<b>Non-residential building</b>	<b>168,625</b>	<b>182,150</b>	<b>+ 8.0%</b>
Office bldg	19.3	21.8	12.4
Hotels and Motels	6.9	8.0	17.6
Stores	22.3	22.6	1.1
Other commercial	18.2	20.1	11.0
Manufacturing	7.9	8.6	8.5
Education bldgs	43.1	47.2	9.4
Health Care facilities	20.5	21.9	6.5
Other Institutional bldg	30.5	32.1	5.3
<b>Non-building construction</b>	<b>100,500</b>	<b>106,500</b>	<b>+ 6.0%</b>

Table 1. Value of Construction Project Starts (\$ Million). [Source: McGraw Hill Construction, T. Grogan & T. Ichniowski (December 2005)]

demanding better service from their "supply partners." Industrial markets often are a special case because there are fewer codes and standards, and each industrial customer might have different requirements. Professional remodelers often use the same building materials used in new construction. However, most remodelers are small so service and smaller volumes could be an effective marketing strategy. Important in each case is determining how you as a component manufacturer can help these end users solve their problems. The best way to do this is to get closer to them. Business innovation means creating ways to solve human needs and problems. Talking to the end user will help you determine how to become part of their "team," whether you are a manufacturer/supplier of steel, concrete or other building materials including wood. *SBC*

*Al Schuler works for Forestry Sciences Lab in Princeton, WV. Please note that the economic information/opinions contained in this article are not necessarily those of the USDA Forest Service. Dr. Schuler can be reached at 304/431-2727 or [aschuler@fs.fed.us](mailto:aschuler@fs.fed.us). His economic information can also be found online at [www.sbcmag.info](http://www.sbcmag.info).*

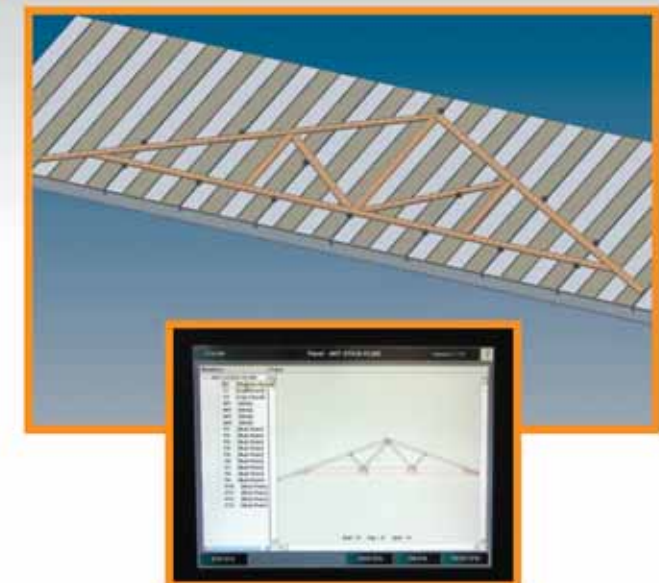
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# Bcmmc 2006

## Show Provides Resources for Developing a Maintenance Program

by Stephanie Watrud

Calling all shop employees responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of manufacturing equipment!

In a recent **SBC Industry One Minute Poll**, component manufacturers (CMs) were asked about their equipment replacement programs, equipment program schedules, maintenance managers and utilizing the tools at the Building Component Manufacturers Conference (BCMC) to address these issues.

Forty percent of survey respondents said they follow a long-term equipment replacement program. Don Groom of Stark Truss Co. said, "We evaluate equipment daily, weekly and monthly and pay close attention to the pieces of machinery that are scheduled for future maintenance." With a full-time maintenance person at each Stark plant, this allows them to keep machinery running consistently and provide their customers a quality product on time. "Attending BCMC allows us to see the latest technology that could be incorporated into our replacement program," said Groom.

BCMC attendees can follow up on new information that can enhance their productivity.

Steve Shrader of Hundegger USA said, "Buyers do ask what long-term maintenance problems they can expect with each saw or piece of machinery." He said, "We use BCMC to educate, so manufacturers can avoid some of these problems." Steve and other Hundegger employees say, "Having the exclusive contact enables us to gain maintenance information from the customers as well. We are not only there to answer their questions, but they are able to provide the feedback we need to improve our service."

So what about the remaining 60 percent of manufacturers? Those that responded to the poll indicated they perform maintenance on machinery when it breaks down or slows down production. Others indicated they update parts of machinery when new technology becomes available. BCMC is the one place manufacturers can network with each other and also with suppliers to see how to resolve their issues. Since they get live demonstrations on the floor, and the time they need with suppliers, CMs indicated that BCMC was the best place for an exclusive look at how they can gain the benefit of having all exhibitors in one place as a resource when creating a maintenance program or weekly, monthly or quarterly checks.

Moreover, those that attend BCMC can follow up on new information that can enhance their efficiency and productivity. They are able to fine tune their processes and discuss how they can better meet the needs and expectations of their customers through mechanized solutions.

While each manufacturer decides what maintenance or replacement program suits the company's unique needs, the ability to discuss options and get recommendations from equipment suppliers is the first step in developing a comprehensive machinery management program. One of the best ways to get all the information you need to achieve this, from a variety of expert sources, is by attending the Building Component Manufacturers Conference, October 4-6, in Houston, TX. **SBC**

For more details and registration information, visit [www.bcmshow.com](http://www.bcmshow.com).

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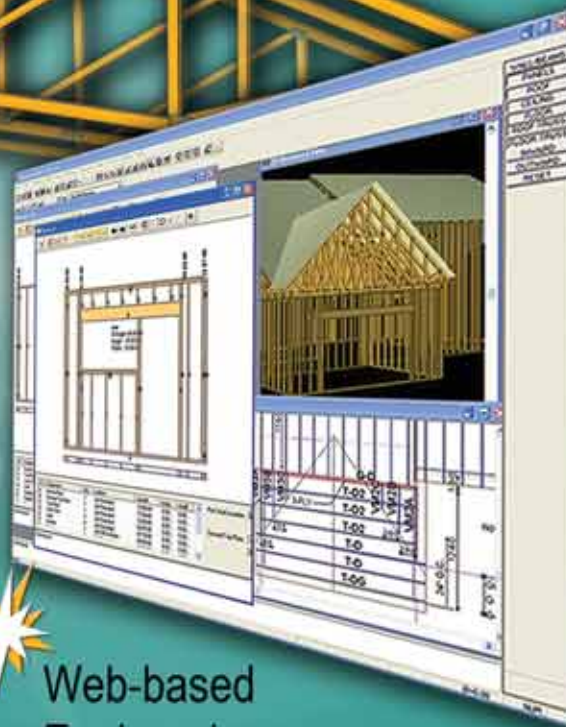
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# Wtca Update

## TTT Recertification Moves Online

by Emily Patterson

Less than six months remain to renew your lapsed TTT certification. Plus, exciting new recertification options coming in January 2007!

Truss Technician Training (TTT) recertification is moving online! Beta testing is underway to allow TTT-certified technicians to report and track their recertification activities, and new online courses are in development to make recertifying easier than ever. Plus, the recertification period has been extended from two years to three years. While the new process is implemented, technicians whose certifications have already expired have been given a one-year grace period in which to recertify (the period began January 1, 2006). But act now—the grace period expires on January 1, 2007—just six months to go!

### Instant Notification

Once the grace period has passed, WTCA will begin notifying technicians via email when their certification is about to expire. The system will send a reminder email to the student and his or her training manager 45 days prior to the expiration date on the technician's original certificate. If the technician doesn't recertify, reminder emails are sent again 15 days before the expiration date and on the expiration date itself. During the 2006 grace period, similar notification emails have also been sent to technicians whose certification has already lapsed.

### New Ways to Recertify

Technicians can choose from a number of industry-related activities to create their own customized recertification program. The new process is based on a 12-point system, where technicians earn recertification credit by participating in qualifying activities. (See chart on facing page for a list of qualifying recertification activities and the number of points assigned to each.)

"Initial feedback from component manufacturers showed a high demand for an online recertification course," said Rachel Smith, P.E., WTCA's Director of Technical Education. "We wanted to give students the flexibility to build their online training and select topics à la carte, so we've developed a number of TTT recertification modules, which can be combined to fulfill the recertification requirement or used with other activities for a total of 12 recertification points."

The topics covered in the TTT recertification modules are generally not discussed in depth during the TTT courses, so the information is valuable to anyone in the truss industry regardless of the level for which they are recertifying. Some of the topics covered include an overview of BCSI 1-03, the International Building Code, partition separation, floor performance and fire rated assemblies. "The à la carte system allows individuals to choose the modules that interest them most, and they won't be forced to review material that does not pertain to their region or market," said Smith.

### Online Reporting & Tracking

As an added convenience, students can now report and track their recertification activities online at [www.wtcatko.com](http://www.wtcatko.com); select "Truss Technician Training," "TTT Recertification" and click the link to log in and see details on your certification. Earlier this year, three companies volunteered to serve as beta sites to test the new online system. "The beta sites have been very helpful in assisting us as we tailor the system to best meet component manufacturers' needs," said Smith.

Recertification Activities	Points
Participate in specialized online TTT course(s) that outline the industry's latest technical developments	2-6 points
Present a Truss Technology Workshop or technical seminar for building officials, the local HBA, fire service, etc.	12 points
Attend a WTCA Chapter Meeting	3 points
Attend a technical or Open Quarterly Meeting	4 points
Attend a WTCA Regional Workshop & Conference	6 points
Attend BCMC	6 points
Attend technical programs offered by Associate Members (e.g. plate, lumber, connector or EWP suppliers)	To be determined on a case-by-case basis
Complete an accredited college-level course that demonstrates the technician's desire to further his/her career	To be determined on a case-by-case basis
Other technical activities and programs	To be determined on a case-by-case basis

The information in the TTT Certification database is compiled from up to three different TTT databases that date as far back as 1997, explained Smith. "Our goal is to maintain the most up-to-date and accurate information possible, and we want technicians to provide us with feedback as they go through the recertification process so we can continue to enhance the system," she said.

For more information about the TTT recertification system, or if you have questions regarding your records, contact WTCA staff. **SBC**

## New WTCA Members

### Contractor's Truss Systems, Inc

PO Box 669  
Cotter, AR 72626-0669  
870/435-5655  
Ms. Teresa Newman

### Pride Industries, Inc.

6956 Commercial Ave  
Billings, MT 59101-6253  
406/655-1200  
Mr. Victor Cantrell

### Randek Bautech AB

Tangvagen 24  
Falkenberg, S-31130 Sweden  
46/380-566500  
Mr. Lars-Erik Andersson

### WoodSmart Solutions LLC

3500 NW Boca Raton Blvd  
Suites 701 & 702  
Boca Raton, FL 33431-5851  
561/416-1972  
Mr. Charles A. Morando

For more information about WTCA membership, contact Anna (608/310-6719 or [astamm@quallim.com](mailto:astamm@quallim.com)) or visit [www.sbcindustry.com](http://www.sbcindustry.com). Listing as of May 5, 2006.

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- **Allen Erickson** • Cal-Asia Truss • 925/680-7701
- **Ben Hershey** • Alliance TruTruss, LLC • 602/252-1772
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- **Steven A. Spradlin** • Capital Structures Inc. • 479/783-8666
- **Mike Walsh** • Stock Components • 919/431-1000

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## Open Quarterly Meeting Highlights: May 12, 2006, Washington, DC

The meeting opened at 8:03 a.m., and a sign-in sheet and an anti-trust statement were distributed. Don Groom thanked Allen Erickson and staff for a great Legislative Conference. The 2006 meeting minutes were approved unanimously. Joe Hikel then provided a presentation on behalf of the Capital Area chapter, giving an overview of the market.

**BCMC & SBC Magazine:** Doug Folker reported on the current status of BCMC. He reviewed additional component manufacturer roundtables that are being added on Tuesday evening at 5:00 p.m. He gave an overview of a recent BCMC Committee conference call. He detailed the current exhibit space sales and number of exhibitors and thanked all the current sponsors for their participation. Staff reported on the upcoming issue of *SBC Magazine*. There was a request for continued participation in the One Minute Poll, which helps in the development of industry articles. Ad sales are up 30% over 2005. Staff encouraged the Board to remember to thank the advertisers for their tremendous support of the publication.

**Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee is working on the TPI joint venture agreement with the test facility. Lumber grading with finished trusses is an important topic we are addressing.

**Nominating Committee:** The Board voted unanimously to elect Ben Hershey as incoming secretary.

**Treasurer's Report:** Barry Dixon reviewed the income statement and reported that the organization is in good shape compared to budget. The treasurer's report was unanimously approved.

**Legislative Conference Recap:** Various members provided feedback on the conference. Legislative Chair Allen Erickson encouraged continued participation and relationship building. A discussion took place about the importance of increasing participation from members in future years, and each Board member was encouraged to bring at least one additional person next year.

**Chapter Policy Development:** The Board reviewed the draft resolution on the topic of developing relationships between legislators and chapters, including the creation of a seat for a Legislative Relationship Chair in each chapter. Likewise, a policy was reviewed on the topic of creating a resolution about building relationships with fire officials and holding plant tours for fire service personnel. The Board unanimously approved both resolutions.

**NLBMDA Joint Legislative Conference in 2007:** The Board discussed having a joint Legislative Conference with the National Lumber & Building Material Dealers organization starting next year. The board provided feedback that this was a good idea since there are so many synergies and common membership.

**Industry Research Plan Update:** The goal is to get the facility built by the end of the year. TPI has presented WTCA with a joint venture proposal and staff will be drafting a term sheet for both organizations to review.

**Review of Tech Note Approach:** Staff reviewed the WTCA *Tech Notes* that had recently been created and asked members to provide information about any technical issues in the marketplace that would benefit from having an industry position with a united voice. We're also planning to create Management Notes that have the same concept. We can solve a lot of problems jointly through this process.

**Key Industry Supplier Update - Truss Plates & Steel:** Mike Cassidy reported that TPI has been very busy with the update of the TPI-1 Standard, which started in January. Project Committee meetings are coming up on May 16. TPI made an outreach to industry folks impacted by the standard by sending 900-1000 requests to participate in an open forum. Regarding steel pricing, there is a lot of upward price pressure right now, particularly due to zinc.

**Key Industry Supplier Update - Connector Industry/Steel:** Staff reported that there's a lot of controversy right now in the new residential and building code with respect to shear wall design. WTCA has written a couple of letters in support of going back to 2000 code language as it is clearer and we believe best represents current understanding of performance. Component manufacturers need to understand exactly how to apply their wall panel products based on the code and WTCA will be very involved in this topic in the upcoming code cycles and in producing a guide on how to build walls to the code.

**Key Industry Supplier Update - Lumber:** WTCA and the Mid South chapter had a good meeting with the Southern Forest Products Association in April. With regard to the issue of U.S./Canada softwood lumber trade, the agreement is a very positive outcome for our industry.

**Issues Going on in the Market:** Board members brought up the following issues:

- Numerous fire trainer contacts occurred with our membership regarding "trusses without plates" (OpenJoist 2000). WTCA is working with Open Joist to educate the fire community on this topic—the fact is that the adhesive burns more slowly than the wood, so this is a misunderstanding.
- The Wisconsin Chapter and WTCA staff are working on a residential code issue regarding how ANSI TPI 1 is being applied. At this point, TPI 1-2002 is not being allowed based on the existing state code language—the state has said that because they have adopted the 1995 standard, truss manufacturers can't use the 2002 standard.
- In Iowa, they have had a few incidents of people leaving the ridge open in agricultural buildings for ventilation purposes. Component manufacturers are now being asked to fix situations where connector plates are falling off. These trusses were not made to be exposed to the elements. WTCA will help create a *Tech Note* on this topic.

The meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m. **SBC**

*The next WTCA Open Quarterly Meeting will be held August 2-4 in San Diego, CA. For more information, contact WTCA staff at 608/274-4849 or wtca@sbcindustry.com, or visit www.sbcindustry.com.*



# Call for Nominations



Awarded each year at BCMC to an individual member of WTCA who has advanced the interests of WTCA and the structural building components industry.

<b>1986</b> Staton Douthit Dr. Stanley K. Suddarth	<b>1996</b> Lee Vulgaris
<b>1987</b> Dave Chambers Don Percival	<b>1997</b> Kirk Grundahl
<b>1988</b> Don O. Carlson	<b>1998</b> Bob Ward
<b>1990</b> Leonard Sylk George Eberle	<b>1999</b> John R. Herring
<b>1991</b> John Mannix Bill Alcorn	<b>2000</b> Thomas J. Manenti
<b>1992</b> Rip Rogers	<b>2001</b> Bernie Boilen
<b>1993</b> Tom Carbeck	<b>2002</b> Koss Kinser
<b>1994</b> Michael Conforti	<b>2003</b> Merle Nett
<b>1995</b> Don Hershey Bill McAlpine	<b>2004</b> Richard Brown Andy Schwitter
	<b>2005</b> Suzi Grundahl
	<b>2006</b> Attend the annual meeting at BCMC to find out!

Email nominations for this year's Hall of Fame inductee to WTCA at [fame@sbcindustry.com](mailto:fame@sbcindustry.com) or fax them to 608/274-3329 by July 15, 2006.



As required by WTCA Bylaws, we would like to announce the opening for nominations for service as a Regular Member Representative on the WTCA Board of Directors. The requirements are:

- Directors shall take office at the first WTCA Quarterly Meeting following BCMC.
- Directors must attend WTCA Open Quarterly Meetings.
- Directors must be willing to be involved in WTCA Committee activities, with the purpose of advancing WTCA's mission.

Email nominations for WTCA Board of Directors openings to WTCA at [nominations@sbcindustry.com](mailto:nominations@sbcindustry.com) or fax them to 608/274-3329 by July 15, 2006.



Awarded each year at BCMC to an individual supplier member of WTCA who has enthusiastically supported the structural building components industry.

At BCMC 2005, the inaugural award was presented to:

**Mike Bugbee**  
**Simpson Strong-Tie Company**

Email nominations for this year's Bowman Industry Enthusiast Award to WTCA at [bowman@sbcindustry.com](mailto:bowman@sbcindustry.com) or fax them to 608/274-3329 by July 15, 2006.

## SBC Leadership Award



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**creativity**  
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Email nominations for the SBC Industry Award to [sbcaward@sbcindustry.com](mailto:sbcaward@sbcindustry.com) or fax them to 608/274-3329 by July 15, 2006.





# Code Connection

## The Phased Approval (Deferred Submittal) Process in the IRC

by WTCA Staff

Deferred submittals in the residential construction application process explained.

The sections quoted below are from the 2003 edition of the International Residential Code® (IRC). They are conceptually the same as what is in the 2000, and 2006 editions of the IRC, although some section numbers may be different. The quoted sections are from the Model IRC and do not reflect any duly enacted local amendments.

### Issue

The question arises from time to time regarding whether or not Truss Design Drawings (TDDs) are required to be submitted with the other construction design documents at the time the application for a residential building permit is submitted. Deferred submittals are common with commercial construction, so it is seldom an issue for those types of jobs. The "simple" answer for residential construction as provided in the IRC is, "It depends." That is, it depends upon the interpretation of the local authority having jurisdiction and whether there is a specific code amendment or policy that clarifies the submittal requirements for issuing a permit.

In the absence of a specific code amendment or policy, the building official, at his or her discretion, may or may not require the submission of TDDs at the time the permit for the structure is requested.

Here are some possible options.

- Submission of TDDs may be allowed as a separate submission after permitting, but prior to installation (R502.11.1/R802.10.1), and may be considered as part of the typical approval process (R106.1).
- If submission of TDDs is required at the time of permitting, and if the manufacturer of the trusses has not yet been selected by the owner or the owner's agent, the building official may accept a later submission of the TDDs as a phased approval (R106.3.3).
- If submission of TDDs is required at the time of permitting and are submitted with the other construction documents for review and approval, and structural changes are made requiring changes to the TDDs, the building official may accept the changes as amended construction documents (R106.4).

**Note:** If duly enacted fees (R108.1) have been established for either phased approval or for the review of amended construction design documents, the building official may require payment of such fees by the owner or the owner's agent.

### Code Background

Requirements specific to TDDs for roof trusses (similar for floor trusses, see R502.11.4) are provided in Section R802.10.1, which states:

**R802.10.1 Truss design drawings.** Truss design drawings, prepared in conformance with Section R802.10.1, shall be provided to the building official and approved prior to installation. Truss design drawings shall include, at a minimum, the information specified below. Truss design drawing shall be provided with the shipment of trusses delivered to the jobsite.

Per this section, the requirement for the submittal of TDDs is twofold:

### at a glance

- Deferred submittals are permitted by the model IRC code.
- The building official, at his or her discretion, may or may not require the submission of TDDs at the time the permit for the structure is requested.

Continued on page 34

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**The STEALTH**

## Code Connection

Continued from page 32

1. They are to be approved prior to installation and
2. They are to be provided with the trusses when delivered to the jobsite.

The IRC does not provide any further provisions specific to the submittal or approval process for TDDs. It does, however, provide provisions for the submittal and approval process for construction documents. These provisions are provided in Chapter 1, Administration.

## Outline of the Permitting Process in the IRC

A. The permit approval process is part of the building official's scope of work:

**R104.2 Applications and permits.** The building official shall receive applications, review construction documents and issue permits for the erection and alteration of buildings and structures, inspect the premises for which such permits have been issued and enforce compliance with the provisions of this code.

B. It is the responsibility of the owner, or the owner's agent, to make the required submittals for permits:

**R105.1 Required.** Any owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace

any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system, the installation of which is regulated by this code, or to cause any such work to be done, shall first make application to the building official and obtain the required permit.

**R105.3 Application for permit.** To obtain a permit, the applicant shall first file an application therefor in writing on a form furnished by the department of building safety for that purpose.

C. Construction design documents are to be submitted with permit application and specific information is to be included on the construction documents:

**R106.1 Submittal documents.** Construction documents, special inspection and structural observation programs, and other data shall be submitted in one or more sets with each application for a permit. The construction documents shall be prepared by a registered design professional where required by the statutes of the jurisdiction in which the project is to be constructed. Where special conditions exist, the building official is authorized to require additional construction documents to be prepared by a registered design professional.

**Exception:** The building official is authorized to waive the submission of construction documents and other data not required to be prepared by a registered design professional if it is found that the nature of the work applied for is such that reviewing of construction documents is not necessary to obtain compliance with this code.

**R106.1.1 Information on construction documents.** Construction documents shall be drawn upon suitable material. Electronic media documents are permitted to be submitted when approved by the building official. Construction documents shall be of sufficient clarity to indicate the location, nature and extent of the work proposed and show in detail that it will conform to the provisions of this code and relevant laws, ordinances, rules and regulations, as determined by the building official.

D. The construction design documents are to be examined, approved and fees paid as applicable:

**R106.3 Examination of documents.** The building official shall examine or cause to be examined construction documents for code compliance.

**R106.3.1 Approval of construction documents.** When the building official issues a permit, the construction documents shall be approved in writing or by stamp. One set of construction documents so reviewed shall be retained by the building official. The other set shall be returned to the applicant, shall be kept at the site of work and shall be open to inspection by the building official or his or her authorized representative.

**R108.1 Payment of fees.** A permit shall not be valid until the fees prescribed by law have been paid. Nor shall an amendment to a permit be released until the additional fee, if any, has been paid.

**R108.2 Schedule of permit fees.** On buildings, structures, electrical, gas, mechanical, and plumbing systems or alterations requiring a permit, a fee for each permit shall be paid as required, in accordance with the schedule as established by the applicable governing authority.

E. Phased approval (or deferred submittal) is allowed:

**R106.3.3 Phased approval.** The building official is authorized to issue a permit for the construction of foundations or any other part of a building or structure before the construction documents for the whole building or structure have been submitted, provided that adequate information and detailed statements have been filed complying with pertinent requirements of this code. The holder of such permit for the foundation or other parts of a building or structure shall proceed at the holder's own risk with the building operation and without assurance that a permit for the entire structure will be granted.

If a phased approval submission is accepted, work on the structure continues with the construction documents amended per the phased approval.

F. If any changes have been made to the original approved construction documents, including changes to the approved TDDs, the changes must be submitted for approval and the amended construction documents approved.

**R106.4 Amended construction documents.** Work shall be installed in accordance with the approved construction documents, and any changes made during construction that are not in compliance with the approved construction documents shall be resubmitted for approval as an amended set of construction documents.

## Summary

Knowing the permit process of the jurisdiction in which the building is located and the specific submittal requirements for the review and approval of the TDDs will help you avoid the many "last-minute" problems associated with this process. Some jurisdictions have enacted local amendments to the adopted building code. Others have developed separate written policies that clarify their position in this matter. Local rules may also have special accommodations for buildings built from master plans. Visit the *Tech Note* web page at [www.sbcindustry.com/technotes.php](http://www.sbcindustry.com/technotes.php) to see if any clarifications have been provided for your jurisdiction. **SBC**

For more information about how to get involved in the code process, contact WTCA staff at 608/274-4849 or [codes@sbcmag.com](mailto:codes@sbcmag.com).

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# Working for Your Workers

## Tricks of the Trade

Hot new workforce development trend: go back to school!

by Sean D. Shields

**Y**ou can't teach an old dog new tricks. However, those of you who stay up late to watch David Letterman probably know that if you start young enough, you can teach a dog to balance on a beach ball while whining the "The Star-Spangled Banner." What does this teach us? The young mind can learn just about anything before it's been cluttered with a lifetime of experience. You can take advantage of this fact.

One of the single most important steps you can take as a manufacturer to immediately improve your workforce situation is to develop a working relationship with your local community colleges, technical schools and universities. It is never too early to start; even high schools can be a rich source of young minds eager to learn the skills necessary to become employable. As was pointed out in the column a few months ago, students coming out of these educational institutions are "clean slates" waiting for you to fill their heads with your own personal tricks of the trade.

"Having a relationship with our local high school is great because every time we have an opening, we have the ability to bring in new blood," says Priscilla "Perky" Becht, Chambers Truss.

Chambers Truss has built a relationship with the drafting teacher at their local high school. First, they sold the school district a drafting printer at a discount in order for the students to be able to take computer generated plans and print out building schematics. They've taken that relationship further by inviting the drafting students into their facility to observe designers and production staff at work. Some of the students also earn class credits for working in the plant after school.

This arrangement has produced results. Perky pointed out, "We hired one young man out of there and kept him for ten years; another young lady we had for more than four."

Relationships with colleges are important, not only because of the many career fairs and job expos they host, but also for the opportunity for you to speak to a classroom of attentive students about the many rewarding careers in the structural building components industry.

Bruce Bain of Richco Structures has literally gone from the back of the classroom to the front of it at his local technical college. First, he attended classes there, and now he gives presentations on the structural building components industry to groups of architectural students. Bruce's volunteerism is at least partially responsible for the fact that nearly half of Richco's technical staff have been hired from local technical schools.

"I'd contact the instructor and offer to give a presentation on what our company manufactures and what we require of our truss technicians," says Bruce. "I've then been able to go back to that instructor to get recommendations on the brightest students they have and whether they may be a fit for Richco."

Through the years of involvement, Bruce was invited to serve on one of the technical school's curriculum advisory committees. As a committee member, he gets a

Continued on page 40

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### at a glance

- ❑ Relationships with high schools are great because they can bring in new blood into a company.
- ❑ Bruce Bain of Richco Structures gives presentations at the local technical college that he graduated from.
- ❑ Keith Azlin has been working with WTCA-Arizona to set up an internship program between the two ITT Technical Institutes and component manufacturers.

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## Working for Your Workers

Continued from page 36

unique opportunity to give recommendations on what the students are taught. In addition, he is able to interview students to get their evaluations of the instructors.

Bruce shared, "You get a better understanding of the environment in which these kids are learning, and you get a good picture of the quality of the various instructors. You begin to target the promising students coming out of the classrooms of the instructors you trust."

Arranging internships through the career and counselor offices of your local schools is also a win-win-win situation for you, the student and the institution. Keith Azlin, U.S. Components, has been working diligently with his chapter, WTCA-Arizona, to set up an internship program between the two ITT Technical Institutes in the Phoenix area and component manufacturers in that part of Arizona.

"The goal is to get them out of the AutoCAD or structural design course and get them working with industry design software," says Keith. "We're all looking for help, and this is a really easy place to find it."

In the end, this is what it's really all about—finding the employees you need to get the job done and keep your customers coming back for more. You can spend a lot of capital and time searching far and wide for someone with a year or two of "experience" at another plant, or you can save some of that money and invest your time in building relationships with your local schools to find a steady and long-term source of promising employees. **SBC**

*In the August issue, this column will explore the other side of your workforce by discussing the potential implications national immigration reform may have on your supply of production employees.*

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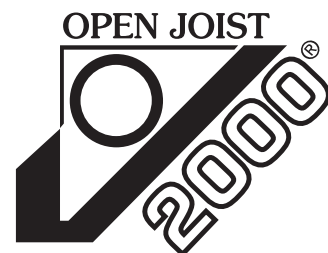
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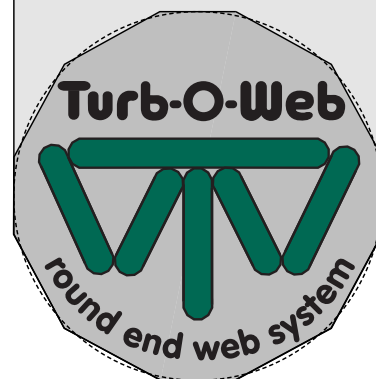
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# 2006 SBC LEGISLATIVE Conference Building Relationships

by Sean D. Shields

**S**cott Ward, Southern Components, shared the following perspective on his first **SBC** Legislative Conference:

*No television show or movie can bring to reality the awesome size and breadth of Washington, DC. The buildings are massive and stately, and the memorials inspire pride in America's historical roots. This was my first time in our nation's Capital, and it was an experience I will never forget.*

*As I visited my lawmakers in their offices on "the Hill," I quickly realized how very busy everyone is as they multi-task many different jobs throughout their day. So, I was impressed when my U.S. Representative took time to meet with me personally even to the point of being late for a vote in order to speak with me concerning several issues that may have a tremendous impact*

*on our industry. I walked away from his office really feeling like I have a voice in the legislative process.*

*The conference speakers assembled by WTCA for our 2006 Legislative Conference were also extremely informative and helpful in my understanding of how our Congress functions, and the tour of the White House arranged through WTCA was probably one of the greatest things I have ever been given the opportunity to do.*

*My respect for Congress and its importance in our country has grown for me to a much higher level through participating in this year's Legislative Conference. This visit has made me proud of our nation and our industry, and made me realize how blessed I am to be an American. I will be back for another round next year.*

Continued on page 42

# Visits to Capitol Hill



"The Legislative Conference is about being active in government, not just complaining about it. It's about realizing that a democracy requires citizen involvement. That's why we come here."

—Joe Kannapell, MiTek, Charlottesville, VA



"I enjoyed my meeting. Representative [Trent] Frank's (R-AZ) legislative aide was very knowledgeable on the bills and gave the impression the Congressman was in support of our industry on our issues. This was a great way to get involved in our government process."

—Chad Lilleberg, Shuck Component Systems, Glendale, AZ



Timing is everything. That idiom couldn't be more true when it comes to Congress, and this year's Legislative Conference was a perfect illustration. With immigrants protesting in the streets across the country, and health care costs spiraling on a seemingly uncontrollable path upward, these problems are in desperate need of immediate solutions.

Immigration reform, and its potential impact on workforce availability, was chosen as the primary issue for our industry at the conference this year. Ms. Juria Jones (see page 56), one of the conference speakers, shared how our visits to Capitol Hill came on the eve of the Senate Judiciary Committee tackling a key compromise bill on immigration. As a consequence, Senators were eager to hear our viewpoint on this issue before they voted.

The price of health care, and the subsequent cost of health insurance, is making it more and more difficult for those employers, particularly small businesses, who provide such health care for their employees, to continue to affordably provide it. This was another key issue chosen for the conference this year, and as we discovered in a meeting at the Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security

Administration (see page 52), the Senate was prepared to vote on a key bill that would allow small businesses to band together into Association Health Plans to negotiate better insurance rates.

From various knowledgeable sources, we also learned that Congress would shortly consider legislation that would permanently repeal the estate tax, and debate another bill that would restructure a current tax policy related to timberland ownership, both important issues to our industry.

As members stormed the offices of their Congressional delegates, they found lawmakers and legislative assistants who often remembered them from past

visits, were well versed on the issues, and eager to hear their viewpoints. They brought with them a series of talking points (see page 44-48) to help frame the issues and highlight how they affect the structural building components industry. By bringing up additional issues such as workforce training, expanded health savings accounts, medical liability tort reform and the regulatory cost burden born by small businesses, our industry has already begun to address future legislation that will likely be debated during next year's legislative conference. Be sure you don't miss it!

**In Pictures:** **Top:** 2006 Legislative Conference attendees prepare for hill visits with a WTCA briefing. **Middle:** Jack Dermer (American Truss Systems, Inc.) (center) and Frank Klinger (Mid-Valley Truss & Door Co. (right) meet with a legislative aid for Representative Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX). **Bottom:** Carl Schoening (Truswal Systems Corporation) speaks with a legislative aid for Senator Kay Bailey-Hutchison (R-TX).

## Hoyd vs. Otter

by Kendall Hoyd

"Let's get ready to rumble!"

You could almost hear that familiar phrase faintly in the background as I sat across the table from my Congressman, Representative Butch Otter, in his Capitol Hill office and brought up the issue of immigration reform. He is not a man who is afraid to take a firm position, and I found out his position on immigration was very firm. What ensued was a forty-minute, round-by-round bout over the impact immigration reform could potentially have on my workforce and the nation's economy. This occurred, not because we didn't like each other, but precisely because we have been able to develop a relationship of mutual respect over the years.

You may remember that last year in my editor's message I wrote about a visit Representative Otter paid to my truss plant (see April 2005 issue). (Of course, you may not remember. I accept the likelihood the only two people who read the article were my mom and me.) In any event, the plant tour played a crucial role in the development of my relationship with the Congressman.

I first met Otter, who is a typical business-friendly lawmaker, four years ago when I made my first trip to the annual WTCA Legislative conference. During that first meeting, he and I politely disagreed on the necessity for the countervailing and anti-dumping duties slapped on softwood lumber from Canada. The intervening visits to Washington, DC were cordial and the Congressman and his staff were always attentive to what I had to say.

...we had finally developed a familiarity with each other, which allowed for a very frank exchange of views...

During the plant tour, an opportunity to have him on my turf for once, we had our first discussion about immigration and the need for reform. Over the past two years, we've continued that conversation. Congressman Otter is of the, "no amnesty, no citizenship," to the point of, "round 'em up and deport 'em because they're lawbreakers," school of thought. Obviously, his firm views, if held by every member of Congress, could be very harmful not only to our industry, but to the entire national economy.

The reason why this year's visit to Congressman Otter's office was so interesting was that out of the four previous Legislative Conference visits, plus the plant tour, we had finally developed a familiarity with each other, which allowed for a very frank exchange of views that are, for all practical purposes, diametrically opposed to one another. The Congressman did have valid reasons for his firm position, but I was able to share with him, first-hand, the potentially disastrous effects of an immediate loss of millions of laborers and tradesman from our economy. During this meeting, I was able to speak candidly and plainly without trying to beat around the bush or be polite. He was able to stake out his position in a similar fashion, directly and without pretense.

Naturally, this mode of conversation was more efficient than my past attempts to be diplomatic. I came away with a more complete picture and understanding of Congressman Otter's stance, and I believe I shared with him facts that will help to inform his decision making in the future.

Looking back, I felt somewhat gratified, but also vaguely dissatisfied, after my first visit to Washington, DC. I think it was probably because of the lack of candor in my discussions, which was likely the result of uneasiness in disagreeing with a member of the United States Congress. It was a natural byproduct of being in unfamiliar surroundings with very important people. On this last visit, however, it became very clear to me the value of my repeated meetings with my members of Congress. I have been able to build deeper relationships with my lawmakers and their staffs, which has allowed me to dispense with formalities and get straight to business. It's actually a lot of fun. Put 'em up!

*Kendall Hoyd is President of Idaho Truss & Component Co. in Meridian, ID. He served the industry as WTCA President and SBC Editor in 2005.*

Continued on page 43

# Hill Visit Spotlight



## Author's Note:

"Building Relationships" was the theme of this year's SBC Legislative Conference. In reality, it is the central focus to our entire legislative advocacy efforts. By talking with your lawmakers, either through emails, phone calls or visits to their offices, you are establishing a beneficial two-way path of communication. It provides your lawmaker with a credible source of information from their constituency which they can use to make decisions. It also provides you with a powerful ear of someone who can help you solve problems and make your business environment friendlier.

In addition to the 2006 Legislative Policies & Positions handbook created for WTCA members to use during visits with their Congressional delegates, a series of talking points were drafted to frame the most important issues facing the structural building components industry and provide guidance to lawmakers on specific pending legislation. The main issues addressed at the legislative conference this year were: immigration reform and its impact on the structural building components industry's workforce; health care and the need for additional ways to provide affordable health insurance to employees; tax reform, including the importance of permanently repealing the estate tax; workforce training and the need for additional educational funding; and, the need to reduce the regulatory cost burden borne by small businesses. Below are the talking points used during the conference, which are also available online at [www.sbcleg.com](http://www.sbcleg.com).

## Immigration



### Industry Position

Having safe and secure borders should be a top priority. However, the strong foundations of this nation and its robust economy have always depended on a vibrant immigrant population. In order for the structural building components industry to continue providing the components for affordable structures, there must continue to be a legal way for our industry to hire immigrant workers.

**OPPOSE:** H.R. 4437 (Sensenbrenner, R-WI), S. 1438 (Cornyn, R-TX) and S. 2454 (Frist, R-TN) because they are punitive to employers while lacking any provision for legally hiring immigrant workers.

**SUPPORT:** S. 2611 (Hagel, R-NE, Martinez, R-FL), S. 2612 (Specter, R-PA) and S. 1033 (McCain, R-AZ & Kennedy, D-MA) because they address much needed reforms while providing for expanded visa or guest worker programs.

### Current Workforce Shortage

- A skilled and productive workforce is a critical factor in maintaining competitiveness in the manufacturing sector. Companies that manufacture structural building components are experiencing serious workforce shortages, and the pool of qualified job candidates is shrinking.
- Labor shortages in the structural building components industry have the potential to cause delays in construction and add to the cost of constructed buildings. As Congress seeks to tighten and secure our nation's borders, it is important to remain aware of the significant effects any action may have on the work force of American business.

### Immigrant Labor Relied Upon

- The opportunities for young people to move up the career ladder within the structural building components industry are tremendous. Yet, according to studies done by NAM, the number of young people entering jobs requiring skilled trades continues to diminish.
- Alternatively, immigrant populations are generally eager to fill these types of jobs, perform them well, and are finding that the career development opportunities are valuable to them.

### Need Guest Worker Program

- The structural building components industry pays competitive living wages, provides benefits to its employees, and presents many opportunities for career advancement and long-term job security.

- The structural building components industry is an integral part of the building construction industry, and we provide efficiently-built, cost-effective structural solutions for owners, specifiers and builders. Without a viable workforce this industry will be unable to do its part to meet the public demand for housing and commercial construction.
- It is essential that employers in the structural building components industry be able to legally hire immigrant workers to ease the nationwide manufacturing and building construction labor shortage.

## Health Care

### Industry Position

Unless the high costs of health insurance premiums are quickly brought under control, many manufacturers within the structural building components industry will be unable to provide their employees with adequate health benefits, and may be faced with the difficult choice of dropping health benefits entirely.

### Control High Costs

- The ongoing increase in medical and insurance premium costs in this country is creating a significant barrier to high-quality, accessible health care.
- Nearly 27 million of our nation's uninsured are small business owners, employees or dependents of small businesses with less than 100 employees.

### Association Health Plans (AHP)

**SUPPORT:** S. 1955 (Enzi, R-WY), S. 406 (Snowe, R-ME) and H.R. 525 (Johnson, R-TX), because they address much needed reforms in the health care system by creating association health plans.

- Approximately 75 percent of the structural building components industry is made up of small business owners who average less than \$5 million in annual sales and have less than 50 employees.
- Currently, they are experiencing annual health insurance premium increases averaging nearly 20 percent annually.
- The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has estimated that small businesses obtaining insurance through AHPs should experience average premium reductions of up to 25 percent, because they enable small businesses to take advantage of the same regulatory status, purchasing clout, economies of scale and administrative efficiencies that many large corporations currently utilize.

### Health Savings Accounts (HSAs)

**SUPPORT:** S. 2554 (Enzi, R-WY), H.R. 4511 (Cantor, R-VA) and S.2549 (DeMint, R-SC) because they address much needed reforms in the health care system by enhancing individual Health Savings Accounts (HSAs).

- The structural building components industry supports enhancing HSAs by allowing the dollars saved to roll over from year to year which will enable employees to better afford high-deductible health insurance in combination with these pre-tax savings accounts.
- In addition, expanded HSAs will allow more workers to choose "catastrophic" insurance plans for major medical events, which are more affordable and will reduce the financial burden currently carried by employers and various government and non-profit entities.



Continued on page 46

## Definition:

talk•ing points: (n.)  
paraphrased issues from which a speech, presentation or interview are made.

## Medical Liability Reform

**SUPPORT:** S. 1503 (Frist, R-TN), H.R. 3359 (Conyers, D-MI) and H.R. 4838 (Shaw, R-FL) because they address much needed reforms in the health care system through changes to medical liability litigation and medical liability insurance.

- Steadily increasing medical liability insurance rates are forcing physicians to restrict their services or close their practices. Even worse, to avoid frivolous lawsuits, medical providers are compelled to order unneeded tests and procedures solely to guard against potential malpractice claims.
- Our industry supports reserving punitive damages for egregious cases where they are justified and limiting non-economic damages to reasonable amounts, as well as requiring defendants to pay judgments in proportion to their fault.

"I had a good discussion on our issues in both of my Senator's offices. It was a good opportunity to reinforce our industry's positions. I also discovered they both are willing to support a guest worker provision in the immigration bill."

—Tom Manenti, MiTek Industries, Chesterfield, MO

## Estate Tax



### Industry Position

The structural building components industry supports permanent repeal of the estate tax because it will dramatically reduce the time, money and energy spent by family business owners on estate planning. In turn, it will preserve and expand employment opportunities while ensuring the continued success and vibrancy of small businesses in America.

**SUPPORT:** H.R. 8 (Hulshof, R-MO), H.R. 64 (Cox, R-CA), H.R. 183 (Pitts, R-PA), and S. 420 (Kyl, R-AZ) because they provide for permanent repeal of the federal estate tax.

### Estate Tax Burden

- According to a recent survey conducted by the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), respondents from small and medium-sized manufacturing facilities said that the estate tax is the second greatest tax burden on their companies, exceeded only by income tax.

### Temporary Repeal Costly

- According to the same survey, small and medium-sized manufacturers spend an average of \$32,000 annually on death tax planning, and nearly one-third of respondents indicated that their planning costs had significantly increased—some as much as 100 percent—since the passage of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001.

### Permanent Repeal Needed

- Efforts to further reform the estate tax will only lead to a more complex code, which means family businesses will spend even more money on estate lawyers, accountants and life insurance policies.
- Approximately 75 percent of the companies in the structural building components industry average less than \$5 million in annual sales and have less than 50 employees. Only full repeal of the estate tax will protect the owners of these family businesses who want to pass on their businesses to the next generation.

## Workforce Training

### Industry Position

The structural building components industry believes that to remain competitive in the global economy, America needs to do more—both publicly and privately—to educate and train the workforce of today and tomorrow.

**SUPPORT:** S. 1021 (Enzi, R-WY), H.R. 27 (McKeon, R-CA) and S. 834 (Bingaman, D-NM), because they provide additional funding and programs for training America's workforce. Also, the structural building components industry is supportive of any future legislation that will provide funding to meet the goals and objectives for President Bush's American Competitiveness Initiative.

### Workers Are Key Resource

- Many of the manufacturing jobs that will always exist in the U.S. market, like those within the structural building components industry, are increasingly being filled by immigrant labor due to a low unemployment rate and labor demand in the U.S.
- According to the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), more than 80 percent of manufacturers say they are having trouble finding qualified employees. Sixty percent of manufacturers typically reject half of all applicants as unqualified because of the lack of basic skills.
- Our workers need to have the support and resources to improve their skills in order to keep up with advancements in technology and manufacturing processes.

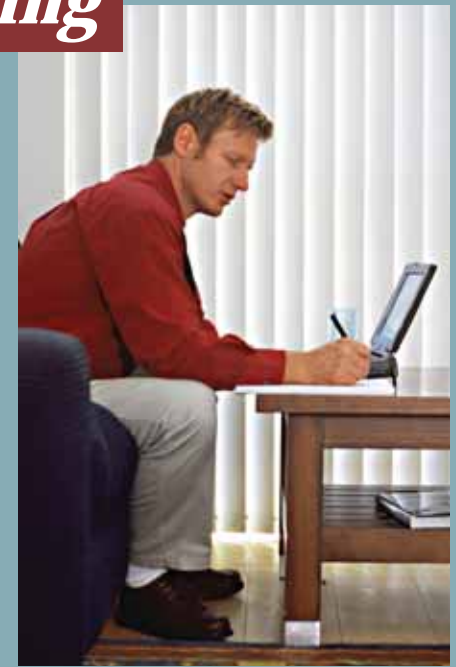
### Additional Training Needed

- American manufacturers have become concerned about lagging graduation rates (as compared with our international counterparts) in math, sciences and engineering—academic areas the structural building components industry heavily relies upon due to the engineering and design requirements of its products.
- In concert with the training and certification our industry already provides, the structural building components industry believes manufacturers can do their part by working more closely with local schools, technical/community colleges and other post-secondary education providers to assist in shaping appropriate curriculum that prepares young people for the technically-advanced jobs now required in our industry.

### American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI)

- President Bush's American Competitive Initiative (ACI) recognizes that training and development programs are critical to maintaining a skilled workforce capable of making efficient use of cutting-edge industry practices. Therefore, greater access to these community college and technical school programs is critically important for individual workers as well as for America's competitiveness.
- The structural building components industry supports the additional funding through the ACI for Community-based Job Training Grants (\$150 million to provide training for 160,000 workers or \$937 per worker). By way of comparison, an individual WTCA online Truss Technician Training (TTT) Level I, II or III course with certification costs less than \$650.
- The ACI also includes innovative Career Advancement Accounts, which will empower individuals by significantly increasing workers' resources and training opportunities like the TTT courses. These online courses have proven to be successful, with nearly 3,700 individuals having completed the TTT courses since 2002.

Continued on page 48



[www.sbcleg.com](http://www.sbcleg.com)

For more information on these and other issues facing the industry, bookmark the **SBC** Legislative website and be sure to visit regularly!



## Regulatory Burden



"This was the first time I met Representative [Tom] Latham (R-IA). It was a great start toward building a new relationship."

—Rick Parrino, Plumb Building Systems, Des Moines, IA

### Industry Position

The structural building components industry supports the reduction of regulatory costs through a simpler tax system, health care reform that creates greater individual responsibility, pension reform that allows businesses to put more money toward the employee than plan administration, and greater oversight on the actual costs of new regulations.

### Costs Are Significant

- The Office of Advocacy at the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) released a report in late 2005 concluding that small businesses bear a disproportionately high burden for complying with federal regulations.
- On a per-employee basis, firms with 20 or fewer employees spend an average of \$7,647 annually to comply with federal regulations. This is 45 percent more than firms with more than 500 employees, which spend an average of \$5,282 annually.
- The annual total burden of regulatory compliance for small businesses was \$1.1 trillion in 2004, and small businesses in the manufacturing sector bore the highest burden, at least double the cost compared to larger firms on a per-employee basis.

### Tax Policy

**SUPPORT:** H.R. 5198 (Manzullo, R-IL) because it reforms the tax code to encourage greater work, investment and entrepreneurial activity. Also, the structural building components industry is supportive of any future legislation that will require a stronger cost-benefit review of proposed regulations.

- The current tax system is the single largest obstacle to increased economic growth. Even worse, the cost of tax compliance is 67 percent higher in small firms than the cost in large firms.
- A long-term solution calls for a new tax system that is simpler and encourages—rather than penalizes—work, investment, and entrepreneurial activity. In the short-term, tax law changes targeted to businesses will spur capital investment, and make U.S. corporations more competitive.

"By the end of the meeting, Senator [Debbie] Stabenow's legislative aide had a much stronger understanding of the need to have the ability to hire immigrant workers in our truss plants."

—Dean DeHoog, Trussway, Sparta, MI

"Rep. Putnam (R-FL)...is behind us on all of the industry's issues. He appreciated that we continue to come and remind him of our concerns."

—Jim Swain, Carpenter Contractors of America, Fort Myers, FL

"[Visiting the White House] was a great opportunity and I'm privileged to have been so near the world's seat of power and among the glorious history of our great nation."

—Tom Manenti, MiTek Industries, Chesterfield, MO

"Daddy's home." Several members felt the hair raise on the back of the necks as the unmistakable whoosh of helicopter blades grew louder. Marine One came in for a landing on the South Lawn of the White House, bringing President George W. Bush home from Mississippi, just as several legislative conference attendees were taking a rare private tour of the West Wing.

### The White House

Although the site of the President's residence was chosen by George Washington, John Adams was the first President to actually live in it upon its completion in late 1800. It was formally named The White House by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1901 when he had it engraved on his stationary.

### West Wing

The West Wing was originally built as a temporary office by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1902. At the time, it was intended to give the President's staff breathing room after unsuccessfully trying to share the second story of the White House with his six children.

### Oval Office

In 1909, President William Howard Taft altered the shape of the Office of the President by rounding the corners. Now one of the symbols of the President, the Oval Office embraced an idea favored by George Washington that in a round room no one would be closer or farther from the President if he stood in the middle.

"It is very different to see something in person instead of through a television screen. The tour of the White House hammered home that perspective. They are real offices where real people like ourselves work everyday to solve the nation's problems."

—Frank Klinger, Mid-Valley Truss & Door Co., Harlingen, TX

"This was a very interesting experience, something I will always remember. There is so much history and protocol within the West Wing."

—Bruce Bain, Richco Structures, DePere, WI

# White House Tour



In Pictures: White House Tour Group (l to r): Joe Odgers, Frank Klinger, Scott Ward, Carl Schoening, Kendall Hoyd, Sherry Dermer, Jack Dermer, Peggy Klinger, Tom Whatley, Melba Whatley, David Horne, Pat Shrugue, Allen Erickson, Scott Arquilla



### Press Briefing Room

Originally the site of the swimming pool built by President Franklin Roosevelt to provide therapy for his polio, the Press Briefing Room was built over the pool by President Nixon to provide a work space for members of the media. This small theatre has been used since 1970 by the White House Press Corps, which opens out into the Rose Garden.

*Special thanks to Tom Whatley, Eagle Metal Products, for arranging this very special tour of the White House.*

In Pictures: White House Tour Participants take turns at the press briefing room podium (l to r): Scott Arquilla, Sherry & Jack Dermer, Pat Shrugue, Scott Ward and Tom Whatley

Continued on page 50

# Agency Visits



**In Pictures:** (l to r) Allen Erickson (Cal-Asia Truss), Ed Hamberger (President & CEO of AAR), Scott Arquilla (Best Homes, Inc.), Kendall Hoyd (Idaho Truss & Component Co.) and Sean Shields (WTCA Legislative & Polical Affairs Manager)

*Hamberger pledged to help WTCA arrange a panel discussion during the BCMC trade show in October with the Class I railroad companies. He also committed to bringing short line railroads into the discussion through his counterpart, Richard Timmons, at the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA).*

## Association of American Railroads

*Ed Hamberger, President & CEO*

The great “iron horse” may have forged a lasting bridge across our nation’s landscape over a century ago, but today, railroads are facing a number of challenges. Last year, a group of conference attendees met with Surface Transportation Board (STB) Chairman Roger Nober to discuss their frustrations with inconsistent rail delivery service, a severe lack of adequate infrastructure and disputes over demurrage charges.

During that meeting, Chairman Nober suggested that beyond seeking assistance from the government, the structural building components industry should strive to build a relationship with the private railroads themselves. Taking that suggestion to heart, this year, conference attendees met with the President and CEO of the Association of American Railroads (AAR), Ed Hamberger.

AAR is the trade association of Class I railroads like BNSF, Union Pacific, Canadian Pacific, CN, CSX and Norfolk Southern. Like WTCA, this trade association is focused on developing programs to improve safety and efficiency, as well as enhance rail service. In addition, AAR places a strong emphasis on direct legislative advocacy by bringing rail-related related issues to the attention of Congressional and government leaders.

Initial discussion focused on the fact there were three basic alternatives currently facing the structural components industry with regard to the railroad industry. One, component manufacturers could choose to confront railroads with their problems and adopt a conflict-oriented relationship; two, manufacturers could seek out a formal dispute resolution process, much like the one offered through the STB; or, three, manufacturers could seek out ways to participate alongside rail companies to find mutually beneficial solutions. It was agreed to by all in attendance that the third alternative was the most preferable.

Hamberger and his staff explained that in their studies of rail service, they break down shipments into thirds—origin/loading, transit, destination/unloading—which correspond roughly to the amount of time cargo spends at each step of the process. Initial results concluded that railroads do an adequate job with regard to transit, but the breakdown, or inefficiency, in shipments generally occurs in what is referred to as “first mile, last mile.” As receivers of shipments, the structural building components industry finds most of its problems tied to that “last mile” of the trip.

At the conclusion of the meeting, an intriguing opportunity was agreed upon. Hamberger pledged to help WTCA arrange a panel discussion during the BCMC trade show in October with the Class I railroad companies. He also committed to bringing short line railroads into the discussion through his counterpart, Richard Timmons, at the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA).

In preparation for this discussion, WTCA staff is working the the AAR to jointly develop a list of questions for our membership to provide a foundation for the discussion. WTCA will also work to bring together our supplier shippers, like Weyerhaeuser and International Paper, and component manufacturer receivers to identify where the problems lie and explore possible solutions through AAR and ASLRRA. If you find yourself frustrated by your railroad service, you will want to be at this panel discussion. Look for more information coming soon!

## U.S. Trade Representative’s Office

*Everett Eissenstat, Assistant Trade Representative of the Americas*

Shortly after Everett Eissenstat spoke to **SBC** legislative conference attendees last year, he was offered a unique opportunity to move from the Legislative branch, where he had served as Chief Legal Counsel for the Senate Finance Committee, to the Executive branch as an Assistant Trade Representative of the Americas in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). In this new position, he is responsible for all trade policy for North, Central and South America. Conference attendees met with him in his new office where he still had a few boxes left to unpack.

USTR is responsible for developing and coordinating U.S. international trade, commodity, and direct investment policy, and overseeing negotiations with other countries. The USTR is part of the Executive Office of the President. They also meet with governments, business groups, legislators and public interest groups to gather input on trade issues and explain the president’s trade policy positions.

In this last regard, conference participants visited with Eissenstat to share with him the structural building components concerns about U.S. trade law. Meeting attendees shared that an unfortunate aspect of current U.S. trade policy is, in the two cases that affect our industry—steel and lumber—countervailing and anti-dumping duties were imposed with no consideration of the unintended consequences on them as consumers or on the overall housing market of which the industry is a part.

They further argued that our industry should be able to purchase quality raw materials from the supplier that best meets our needs, regardless of whether they are of domestic or foreign origin. In short, members argued that U.S. trade policy should encourage free trade that increases resource availability, free-market based costing and increased quality of imported materials.

Eissenstat stated that he knew there were members in Congress, particularly Representative Jim Ramstad (R-MN), who support our industry’s views. At the end of the meeting, he pledged to help circulate our arguments with his new colleagues. He also committed to following up with Ms. Meredith Broadbent, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Industry, Market Access and Telecommunications, to explore opportunities, like their Industry Advisory Committees, for our industry to become more involved in trade policy.



**In Pictures:** (l to r) Kendall Hoyd (Idaho Truss & Component Co.), Everett Eissenstat (Assistant Trade Representative of the Americas) and Scott Arquilla (Best Homes, Inc.)

*Eissenstat stated that he knew there were members in Congress, particularly Representative Jim Ramstad (R-MN), who support our industry’s views. At the end of the meeting, he pledged to help circulate our arguments with his new colleagues.*

“I discovered my Senator, George Allen (R-VA), is pushing for additional federal funds to support more math and engineering teachers in public high schools. This is something our industry can help support him on.”

—Brian Johnson, Structural Technologies, Midlothian, VA

“The legislative assistant for Senator Bill Nelson (R-FL) remembered us from last year. We had a good meeting and found the Senator supported our industry’s position on all the issues.”

—Doug Folker, Robbins Engineering, Tampa, FL

Continued on page 52

# Agency Visits



**In Pictures:** (l to r) Michael Cassidy (Truss Plate Institute), Jimi Grande (Senior Legislative Office), Tom Alexander (Chief of Staff to the Assistant Secretary of Labor), Kirk Grundahl (WTCA Executive Director) and Scott Arquilla (Best Homes, Inc.)

## Department of Labor

*Employee Benefits Security Administration  
Office of the Assistant Secretary & Congressional Liaison Office*

*"First, you win the argument, then you win the debate."*

The Congressional Liaison, or lobbyist, for the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) used this quote by Margaret Thatcher to illustrate a point. The point was in order for ideas like Association Health Plans (AHP) to get through Congress, it was very important for small business constituents—like component manufacturers—to argue for their necessity.

As the cost of health care increases, and the price of health insurance rises with it, the need to find alternatives is becoming desperate. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has estimated that small businesses obtaining insurance through AHPs should experience average premium reductions of up to 25 percent, because they enable small businesses to take advantage of the same regulatory status, purchasing clout, economies of scale and administrative efficiencies that many large corporations currently utilize.

The argument for AHPs has been "won" in the U.S. House of Representatives for over a decade, as a bill authorizing the creation of AHPs has been passed by the House every year. However, the Senate has consistently failed to agree to a bill or offer their version of an AHP bill. That is, until this year. Senator John Enzi (R-WY) sponsored S. 1955, which allowed for the creation of AHPs, and was a bill the structural building components industry came out in strong support of (see Talking Points, page 45).

Through its enforcement of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), the EBSA is responsible for ensuring the integrity of the private employee benefit plan system in the United States. These plans cover approximately 150 million workers and their dependents and include assets of more than \$4 trillion. They also would have direct jurisdiction over monitoring AHPs.

The timing of the meeting could not have been more perfect, as the S. 1955 was currently being debated on the Senate floor. The EBSA Congressional Liaison indicated the argument for AHPs still may not have been "won" in the Senate because it appeared the bill was a handful of votes shy of the 60 required in order to get the bill passed. He shared that, in particular, Senators in three key states (Colorado, Michigan and Louisiana) could vote either way.

Armed with that information, after the meeting an **SBC Legislative Action!** was sent to members in Colorado, Michigan and Louisiana urging them to contact their Senator to vote for S. 1955. It is through this kind of grassroots advocacy that the structural building components industry can begin to win the arguments, so that we can eventually win the debate and influence legislation that benefits the industry.

*"Senator Richard Burr's (R-NC) staff was extremely knowledgeable and informed on the issues. The Senator's position on immigration and health care issues was very favorable to our industry."*

—David Horne, Universal Forest Products, Burlington, NC

## U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Service

*Carlos Iturregui, Chief of Policy & Strategy*

**THEME:** *Knowledge. Know the effect of immigration reform on employers.*

Protesters lined the street, filling the air with chants about liberty, freedom and a chance to live the American dream. On this particular day, it wasn't happening in the streets of L.A. or Chicago, it was occurring in front of the offices of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in Washington, DC. The same building that conference attendees entered for their meeting with Carlos Iturregui, Policy Chief for the United States Citizenship & Immigration Service (USCIS).

As part of the newly formed DHS, the USCIS mission is to "secure America's promise as a nation of immigrants by providing accurate and useful information to all those seeking to live in America; granting immigration and citizenship benefits, promoting an awareness and understanding of citizenship, and ensuring the integrity of our immigration system." Carlos Iturregui and his staff provide perspective to Congress and the Administration regarding long-term immigration policy, and analyze whether any proposed changes will have a positive or negative effect.

So, while outside they were protesting the immigration reform bill passed by the House of Representatives (H.R. 4437) and its harsh enforcement provisions. Inside, members talked with Iturregui about the Senate's version of the bill, S. 2611, which the structural building components industry had come out in strong support of (see Talking Points, page 44), because it provided for a guest worker program and expanded the allowable number of visas.

While the Senate Judiciary Committee Legal Counsel, Juria Jones (page 56) told members the day before she was confident Senate bill could pass as soon as the following Monday, Iturregui went one step farther by stating that lawmakers had already been chosen to serve on the conference committee responsible for hammering out the differences between H.R. 4437 and S. 2611. This indicated a strong belief by the Congressional leadership in both the House and Senate that S. 2611 would likely pass very soon.

Discussion quickly turned to the provisions of the bill, particularly the portion of the bill that would affect the responsibility of the employer with regard to hire of illegal immigrants. Iturregui said one key aspect of the bill would be requiring all employers to utilize an electronic employee verification system, which is currently called the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Basic Pilot.

The SAVE employment verification program involves electronic checks of the Social Security Administration and Department of Homeland Security databases, using an automated system to verify the employment authorization of all prospective and hired employees. Iturregui said this electronic system will allow employers to immediately verify whether someone is legally employable before they offer the individual a job.

Iturregui concluded by saying it will be critical for our industry to be heard during the conference committee meetings, to ensure the final agreement does not have unintended consequences that will irreparably harm our industry's workforce. Consequently, please be prepared to take action when your assistance is requested. The conference committee's work will have a direct impact on how our industry transacts business going forward.

Continued on page 56




**In Pictures:** (l to r) Scott Arquilla (Best Homes, Inc.), Carlos Iturregui (Chief of Policy & Strategy) and Kent Pagel (WTCA Legal Counsel)

*As part of the newly formed DHS, the USCIS mission is to "secure America's promise as a nation of immigrants by providing accurate and useful information to all those seeking to live in America; granting immigration and citizenship benefits, promoting an awareness and understanding of citizenship, and ensuring the integrity of our immigration system."*

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# Conference Speakers

## Juria Jones

*Legal Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee*

Juria Jones is a Chief Counsel for the Courts & Administrative Law unit for the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary. She has responsibility for a broad range of issues, including immigration and border security, oversight of the judiciary, and the courts. Ms. Jones also served as legal counsel to Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. In that capacity, she was responsible for such issues as immigration, civil rights, the Constitution and other issues before the Committee on the Judiciary.

Late last year, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the "Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2004" (H.R. 4437). This bill created a firestorm amongst immigrant populations across the country, and spurred numerous street marches and other types of protests. In short, it successfully brought the issue of immigration reform to the doorstep of every American.

The structural building components industry came out against this bill because it would establish strict new employment reporting requirements and includes stiff fines of up to \$25,000 for each illegal immigrant worker employers have hired. This bill did not contain any guest worker or work visa provisions and threatened immediate deportation for an estimated 11 million individuals currently working in the U.S.

It turns out, that number may be conservative—it's an estimation by the Department of Homeland Security—some policy makers in Washington, DC estimate the number of illegal immigrants currently residing in the U.S. is closer to 20 million. This only underscores the fact that our nation's borders are not as safe as they should be, and that the current immigration system is broken.

Fortunately for our industry, our founding fathers created a Congress with two chambers to provide a structural check and balance. So, even though the House passed an immigration reform bill that could be disastrous for our industry, and more importantly, for our nation's economy, it can't become law without an agreement with the U.S. Senate. That places the Senate Judiciary Committee, which has jurisdiction over immigration policy, front and center to offer up a response to H.R. 4437.

According to Jones, the bill in the Senate with the best chance for success was S. 2611. As legal counsel for the Senate Judiciary Committee, Jones is in the unique position to give conference attendees the inside scoop on what the Senate response might be.

S. 2611, if adopted, would drastically increase border security and beef up enforcement, while simultaneously bolstering the "green card" system and creating an expanded guest worker program.

At the time of her presentation, there were close to 64 amendments proposed for S. 2611, and it was estimated that close to 200 may be offered by the time this bill came up for debate. Consequently, it was difficult for Jones to say with certainty what the bill that is ultimately adopted will contain, but following are some of the highlights.

First, the bill will make provisions for the creation of a "virtual fence" at the

border between the U.S. and Mexico. It would provide funding for additional enforcement both at the border and throughout the U.S. to assist in stopping illegal border crossing and increase deportation. Second, the bill would require employers to conduct an electronic verification check on all current and prospective employees (see Agency Visits, page 53). Third, S. 2611 would create a new category for temporary low-skilled workers called the H-2C visa, which would be a renewable every three years.

Last, this bill would also create a path toward citizenship for current illegal immigrants, who would be required to immediately report to a border crossing to register their existence in the country. If they have lived and worked in the country for less than two years, they would have to leave immediately and apply for a visa through the normal process in order to return. If they have been in the U.S. for more than two years, they would have to verify their employment, pay any back taxes they may owe, and apply for a green card. Jones estimated that with the annual increases to allowable visas and green cards in the bill, it would take six years to clear out the backlog before current illegal immigrants could obtain "citizenship."

Jones concluded that even if the measure passes the Senate, something she was confident would occur, it would have to go to a conference committee—made up of both Senators and Representatives—to hammer out the differences between S. 2611 and H.R. 4437. The structural building components industry will need to take an active role in monitoring this compromise and contacting lawmakers to ensure the guest worker visa programs remain part of the final legislation that will ultimately go to President Bush for his signature.



### In Pictures:

**Top:** 2006 WTCA President Don Groom introduces reception speaker, Juria Jones (Legal Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee). **Middle:** Jones addresses conference attendees at Wednesday night's reception at Washington Court Hotel. **Bottom:** Jones spends time talking to Dwight Hikel (Shelter Systems Limited) and Kirk Grundahl (WTCA Executive Director) after her presentation.

Continued on page 58

## Supplier Sponsors:

Many thanks to the following suppliers for their generous sponsorship of Wednesday's reception at the Washington Court Hotel.

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# Conference Speakers

There was a sense of irony in the room when finally, at the sixth annual Legislative Conference, a member of Congress walked into a room full of component manufacturers and, without prompting, began talking about the importance of the proposed negotiated settlement of the softwood lumber dispute between the U.S. and Canada. The only thing that wasn't surprising about the occurrence was that the message was being delivered by U.S. Representative Donald Manzullo (R-IL), Chairman of the House Small Business Committee and champion of the manufacturing sector. He understood the plight of the structural building components industry, and he was there to deliver the good news.

With roots in the industrial suburbs of northern Illinois, Rep. Manzullo has witnessed first-hand the flight of manufacturing out of the U.S. and the detrimental effect it has had on communities across the country. Conference attendees

"We are currently installing some new machinery in our plant and Representative Donald Manzullo (R-IL) agreed to come take a tour of the plant around Memorial Day after the equipment is up and running."

—Mike Karceski, Atlas Components, Inc., Rockford, IL

tant for our industry to have because they develop relationships. He then gave everyone an assignment: to invite their lawmaker on a tour of their manufacturing plant. His point was simple, that lawmakers meet numerous constituents every day. The best way to cement the structural components industry and our issues into their minds is to show them first hand our industry's products and manufacturing process.



The Congressman pointed out the power of manufacturing is that you have a physical place where you can show someone the fruit of your hands. On Friday morning, the WTCA Board of Directors passed a resolution that will capitalize on this fact. To find out more, read this issue's installment of **Adventures in Advocacy** on page 92.



## Donald Manzullo *Chair, House Committee on Small Business*

In 2006, U.S. Representative Donald Manzullo (R-IL) is continuing his mission to restore manufacturing in America and create good-paying jobs. In his sixth year as Chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Small Business, Representative Manzullo has held more than 60 hearings on the state of manufacturing in America and introduced numerous pieces of legislation to make U.S. companies more competitive so they can expand and create jobs. He also founded the 80-member House Manufacturing Caucus, which he chairs. Representative Manzullo has earned the reputation as Congress' champion of manufacturing.

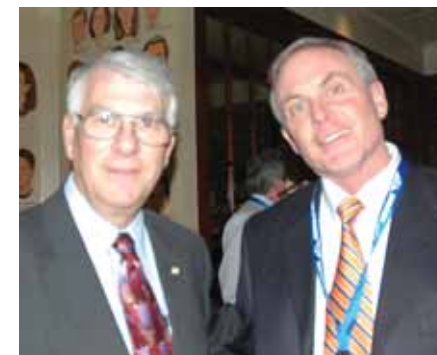
witnessed the impact of that experience, as the Midwestern Congressman jumped up on his soapbox to talk about the important role manufacturers and small businesses play in our nation's economy.

According to Manzullo, from the time Moses asked God to bless his hands that they might do good work, up to the modern era, mankind has survived and prospered through the hard work of one's hands. Unfortunately, in America today, there has been a dramatic shift away from the trades and manufacturing skills, where working with one's hands is essential, to a service-based economy. The Congressman contended the abandonment of manufacturing was a trend that needed to be reversed.

He pointed squarely at his generation as one that was to blame. Those that worked in manufacturing facilities told their sons and daughters they didn't have to work in the plant; that they were above work in the trades or manufacturing. Manzullo asserted that vocational schools were stigmatized, and apprenticeships were abandoned as more and more young people opted to enroll in colleges and universities.

Over the course of two generations, America lost its competitive edge over foreign manufacturers, and the shortage of a dedicated manufacturing workforce prompted many companies to move overseas or close completely. Manzullo stressed that in order to rebuild the manufacturing base that once drove our nation's economy, more support needed to be given to trade schools, technical and community colleges and even high schools to encourage young people back into skilled trades—back to working with their hands.

Finally, Manzullo thanked everyone in the room for traveling to Washington, DC to meet with their elected officials. He pointed out these meetings are impor-



### In Pictures:

**First:** U.S. Representative Donald Manzullo spoke to conference attendees during Wednesday night's dinner. **Second:** (l to r) Jim Swain (Carpenter Contractors of America), Doug Folker (Robbins Engineering), Ted & Linda Kolanko (84 Components), and Rick & Katrina Cashman (Florida Forest Products) listen attentively to Manzullo's presentation. **Third:** Manzullo (left) takes time for a photo with constituent Mike Karceski (Atlas Components). **Fourth:** Attendees enjoy dinner at The Palm Restaurant.



Continued on page 60

*Manzullo gave everyone an assignment: to invite their lawmaker on a tour of their manufacturing plant. His point was simple, that lawmakers meet numerous constituents every day. The best way to cement the structural components industry and our issues into their minds is to show them first hand our industry's products and manufacturing process.*

## Supplier Sponsor:

Many thanks to MiTek Industries, Inc. for their generous gold sponsorship of Wednesday's dinner at The Palm Restaurant.



# Conference Speakers

The dispute between the United States and Canada over softwood lumber has been going on since 1792—literally the origins of our country. The latest chapter in this conflict initially led the structural building components industry to begin hosting an annual legislative conference in Washington, DC in the hopes of informing members of Congress about the detrimental impact it was having on the industry, and to solicit their assistance in securing a resolution.

O'Malley has been to every one of those conferences, and he congratulated the industry for its determination and perseverance which had contributed in no small way to the latest announced negotiated settlement to the softwood lumber dispute. He pointed out that in the beginning of the latest dispute, affectionately known as "Lumber IV," there were numerous interests involved in providing perspective with respect to the conflict. Over the years, some of

## Gary O'Malley

*Legislative Director, Weyerhaeuser Company*

Gary O'Malley is responsible for directing Weyerhaeuser Company's corporate issues management process. This includes ensuring the company is efficiently and effectively addressing selected public policy issues. Prior to assuming this position in 1991, Mr. O'Malley was manager of resource issues and providing primary public affairs support to issues related to the company's forest resource base. Since joining the firm in 1977, Mr. O'Malley has held additional positions with the Corporate Communications and Tax departments.

the extreme positions have lost any influence they had in the debate, leaving a few credible voices to help shape a settlement. Fortunately, the structural building components industry was one of those credible voices.

O'Malley pointed out one of the primary lessons learned in this dispute was that grassroots efforts made a significant impact. Through our industry's solid fact gathering and logical presentation, we brought a strong, credible message about the unintended consequences created by the countervailing and anti-dumping duties (CVD/AD) imposed on Canadian softwood lumber. That messaging was successful in defeating a potentially detrimental "duty as cost" bill moving through Congress that would have increased the duties, and subsequently the price of lumber, significantly.

It also succeeded in building awareness on Capitol Hill of the harmful effects of the Byrd Amendment, a protectionist trade law that essentially created a double benefit for targeted companies: first, through an increase in prices due to a tariff-induced reduced supply; and second, through the distribution of tariff dollars to the petitioning companies that already gain the benefit from the increase in prices. Through perseverance, our industry was able to help gain support for a full repeal of the Byrd Amendment, which will go into effect in 2007.

Most importantly, the industry's grassroots efforts succeeded in building important relationships with key individuals involved in the dispute. O'Malley pointed specifically to Congressional staffers like Everett Eissenstat, who had worked for Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley (R-IA), and Jim Mendenhall, one of the chief negotiators in the dispute with the U.S. Trade Representative's Office. Those relationships, while instrumental in reaching the current softwood lumber settlement, will potentially be even more beneficial going forward as our industry seeks to build awareness of the need for down-

*O'Malley pointed out one of the primary lessons learned in this dispute was that grassroots efforts made a significant impact. Most importantly, the industry's grassroots efforts succeeded in building important relationships with key individuals involved in the dispute.*

"Kudos to WTCA staff! Although I am a 'dirt road' guy, thanks to the talking points and speakers I felt very confident and prepared for my meeting with Representative [Spencer] Bachus (R-AL)."

—Joe Odgers, Bama Truss & Components, Shelby, AL

stream users to be involved in determining trade remedies (duties) on foreign imports (see Agency Visits on page 51).

O'Malley warned the negotiated settlement was not final; there are a number of details that still need to be hammered out, but the basic framework has been agreed upon. Ultimately, the settlement is a victory for the structural building components industry and should help everyone's bottom line. It will help create certainty in an otherwise volatile relationship that currently impedes good long-term planning with respect to lumber supply.



**In Pictures:**

**First & Second:** Gary O'Malley addresses attendees regarding the recent softwood lumber negotiated settlement. **Third & Fourth:** Attendees enjoy dinner and networking at Smith & Wollensky.

Continued on page 50

## Supplier Sponsors:

Many thanks to the following suppliers for their generous sponsorship of Thursday's reception at the Washington Court Hotel and dinner at Smith & Wollensky.

**Gold Sponsors (dinner):**  
Alpine Engineered Products, Inc.



**Silver Sponsor (reception):**  
Wood Truss Council of the Capital Area (WTCCA)



# Looking to the Future



**In Pictures:** WTCA Legislative Chairperson Allen Erickson (Cal-Asia Truss) has attended all six of WTCA's Legislative Conferences.

"My Senator, David Vitter (R-LA), was very interested in a plant tour of our facility and this may be of great help to us in the future."

—Scott Ward, Southern Components, Shreveport, LA

"Our meeting with Representative [Solomon] Ortiz (D-TX) was very positive. He knew the issues and was open to all our views. At the end of the meeting, they asked us if they could contact us for our support!"

—Jack Dermer, American Truss Systems, Houston, TX

"I appreciated that my Representative, David Price (D-NC), took the time to meet with me; we had a good discussion on immigration."

—Mike Walsh, Stock Building Supply, Raleigh, NC

## Building Relationships... One Step at a Time

by Allen Erickson

Before you run, you walk, but before you walk, you crawl. I have a lot of passion for our efforts to build a world-class grassroots legislative advocacy movement within the industry. While we are making significant progress toward that goal, it has taken determination and persistence to get to this point. I've attended all six of the WTCA legislative conferences, and I'm honored to have the opportunity to share with you a little of what I have learned.

When I attended the first legislative conference in 2001, I was not alone in being new to the political environment. Previously, I had only been to Washington, DC as a tourist. While I had seen the Capitol building before, I thought of it more as a monument than the actual seat of government. However, that illusion quickly dissipated as I attended my first lawmaker meetings. That year, we also had the fortune of meeting with then Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS), who quickly learned, much to his discomfort, our industry did not see eye to eye with him regarding the softwood lumber dispute between Canada and the U.S.

In those early years, I paid closest attention to the visits to "Capitol Hill" and my meetings with my Senators and Representatives and their legislative aides. Over the years, I have discovered that while those meetings are essential for building relationships and should remain the primary focus of the conference, much can also be accomplished by meeting with the innumerable federal agencies located a stones-throw from that giant marble rotunda.

I also learned over the years that it is normal to feel as if you haven't accomplished much after your first meeting with a lawmaker. First, you feel a little uncomfortable and out of your element. Second, the meeting itself is usually only ten to fifteen minutes. Finally, no one in the meeting knows each other, so it's difficult to get through all the "meat" WTCA staff provides for you to discuss during the meeting. The truth is really a punch line from an old joke, "First you have to get their attention." This rarely happens with a single visit.

The number one thing learned by those who have regularly participated in the legislative conference is that it's all about building relationships. The softwood lumber dispute is a perfect example. In 2001, we met with lawmakers and shared our industry's position, but many thought we were ineffective. Yet, we persisted in talking to people working in various agencies and serving on various committees. We always got good feedback but had little actual results to show.

Still we persevered. Year after year we returned to Washington, DC, and diligently updated lawmakers, legislative aides and agency staff on the status of the softwood negotiations. We listened to what they said, and incorporated it into our presentations. Most importantly, we made allies. We honed our message and supported it with verifiable facts. Along the way, we gained credibility with those we petitioned because we abandoned hyperbole in favor of taking the role of the honest broker.

Those closest to the negotiations learned our suggested solutions were truly solutions, not personal victories. In the end, WTCA did not settle the softwood dispute, nor did we have a seat at the negotiating table. We did, however, educate many who were, and help open their minds so that solutions could be found. We know this because the people we have established relationships with along the way have told us as much.

At the legislative conference this year they told us to continue to preach our reasoned and well thought out positions, and they told us how important it is to come back. Truly, it is an effort that gives us more than we sow, and it is an effort we need to continue as an industry.

*Allen Erickson is Executive Vice President of Cal-Asia Truss in Concord, CA. He has served the industry as WTCA Legislative Committee Chair since 2003.*

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# Mergers & Acquisitions Part 1

how to prepare for sale

by Doug Cerny of Pagel, Davis & Hill

First in a series of four articles on the preparation and steps involved in the sale of your business.

A prospective buyer is interested in talking to you about your component manufacturing business. Are you ready to entertain discussions?

**Y**ou started your manufacturing business because you wanted to be in control of your destiny. You saw needs in the marketplace and had a vision of how you could build a company that would meet those needs. You continue to build your business. Tomorrow morning your phone rings and the caller identifies himself as a representative for a private equity firm that is interested in meeting with you to discuss “exploring purchase” options. Are you ready to go down this path?

Virtually every entrepreneur that has started, built and sold a business will tell you that the next time they sell their business there are certain things that they will do differently. Whether it involves how they have structured ownership, organized their management team or positioned their business in the marketplace, or how they disclosed information to the ultimate purchaser, they all have a story about how they will do it differently the next time. The lessons they have learned in this process present valuable insight to those who have not sold a business before.

This is the first in a series of articles that will touch upon various things that should be considered when going through the sales process. Future articles in this series will address:

- Keeping all relevant conditions (or terms) in the negotiations while pursuing agreement on **valuation** and bridging the gap when agreement cannot be reached on valuation.
- Engaging advisors: why, who, when and at what price?
- Protection features sought by the buyer in the signed agreement: **escrow, representations and warranties, indemnification** and **right of offset**.

To view the definitions of the terms highlighted in this article, visit **Support Docs** at [www.sbcmag.info](http://www.sbcmag.info).

In this article, we will examine the questions you ought to consider while beginning the process of selling your business. Knowing what you want and to assess, as best you can, what the prospective buyer wants is the most critical first step. A good starting point is to spend some time thinking about your current role and what, if any, future involvement you want in the business. Is the role you have been playing the one you want to continue to play? If you have been active and now want to spend time on other things (perhaps enjoying the money you received), do you have management in place to take over your responsibilities? Will the purchaser view your current management team to be capable of operating the business on their behalf? Walking into the negotiation phase with the answers to these questions will not only lay the foundation for a smooth and successful negotiation process, but it will also prepare you for big changes on the horizon.

Next, anticipate the factors that will be presented throughout the valuation process. For instance, do you have realistic expectations as to how a prospective buyer will view the value of your business? Just as the economy goes through ups and downs, the **valuation multiples**, which dictate the price at which companies may sell, will also go up and down, often as a result of factors completely outside your business itself. For example, if a **private equity group** or a series of financial groups have become interested in the component manufacturing industry, this type of external factor can be a reason for a higher valuation multiple because there are buyers chasing sellers. The same thing can hold true if there are one or more large companies in the same or similar industry that are looking to grow through acquisition to get the benefits of scale.

## Time Is Not Always on Your Side

It is also important to recognize that discussions with any prospective buyer do not always happen on your timeline. Just as selling a house involves timing issues, so does selling your business—only to a magnified degree. Therefore, as you run your business and would be interested in holding discussions with a viable prospective buyer or buyers, you need to be prepared for those kinds of discussions to happen any time.

Keep in mind that the process of holding discussions and working toward closing can be quite disruptive. Before the closing, the buyer will want to conduct “due diligence” and understand intimately the operations and financial aspects of your business. You, on the other hand, will want to know if their valuation views are anywhere in line with your views. You also will want to give them enough background information they need to structure an offer—but you don’t want them to spend so much time on the analysis process that the disruption to you (and possibly others in your company) becomes a detriment to the business.

## Think Ahead

So, before you get that phone call or visitor interested in your business, think about the following:

- Is your ownership structure in line with where you are and where you are going? For example, have you made commitments to employees or others that need to be documented?
- Do you want to have a portion of your business owned by a trust or family partnership for the estate planning benefits that can be derived from these entities?
- Are you comfortable enough with your skills to “go it alone” in the negotiation process? For which areas should you seek the advice of a professional (tax advisor, valuation expert, business transaction lawyer, etc.)?
- It is normally preferable for you to sell stock rather than assets (assuming you are incorporated). Is this possible and what are the tax effects?

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## Mergers & Acquisitions

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- What type of consideration will you want or can you live with (cash, notes, stock or a combination of two or more of these)?
- Are there certain employees that you want to assure are properly taken care of?
- Do you have the various assets (operating assets, real property assets, etc.) in the proper entity or entities?
- Are there certain assets (such as real property) that you want to retain rather than sell?
- Are you prepared for the time and attention the negotiation and sales process will take away from your business?
- Are there aspects of your business that you do not want to disclose until you are sure that the buyer is serious?
- Are your records in order for assembly and delivery to aid the buyer's due diligence? (I often advise clients that are getting ready to sell a business for the first time that they will get to know their business in more detail than they ever have before.)
- Do you know what your business will look like to the prospective buyer? For example, is he going to view your salary as too high and could you consider the excess portion as earnings? Or, is he going to take the position that your salary does not reflect what it will cost him to get the same management in place and he will want to lower the earnings stream because he will be paying a higher salary to the next leader?

The analysis of, and answers to, each of these questions will guide you in determining the key drivers in your discussions and negotiations. You will likely complete the analysis of some of these questions with help from the advisors you engage;

after their input, you will have to weigh the various paths you could take and determine the importance of each path.

### Take Control!

As a prospective seller that is serious about assuring that the process will be as efficient as possible, you will want to do as much as you can to control the process. This means you should have a confidentiality agreement in place before you disclose anything to any prospect. You may also want to structure the process in stages: after the confidentiality agreement is signed, you deliver a set of financial statements to the prospect. To the extent possible, you will want to normalize your financial statements with adjustments that demonstrate what the results would have been had the buyer been running the business. Items such as personal autos, excess salaries and other

payments that you have run through the company will no longer be paid by the company—these are added back into the earnings for valuation purposes.

To determine whether the buyer is serious and you and he are within range on valuation, you may want to deliver these financial statements (and possibly include certain additional information on the company such as number of employees, profile of customer base, and key milestones in the company's history) and ask for a valuation range before you disclose any further information. This can help prevent you from spending too much time preparing information before you find out whether the valuation is acceptable to you.

During the process you also want to do the best you can to assure that the business is not disrupted. This begins with assessing who in the company is going to be involved in the process and which details will be disclosed to them. It also involves getting assurances from the buyer that they will only contact the persons that you have identified as "in the know" regarding the possible transaction.

The process of selling your business can be quite rewarding, both emotionally and financially. Knowing what you want or can live with ahead of time and knowing what to expect in the process can make what will likely be a stressful process manageable through good preparation. **SBC**

*Doug Cerny is a shareholder with Pagel, Davis & Hill, P.C. in Houston, TX. His practice focuses on emerging businesses, mergers and acquisitions and corporate finance and compliance. In addition to his experience as inside corporate counsel Doug has represented and continues to represent both buyers and sellers of businesses, having completed more than 250 corporate sales transactions in his career.*

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# Component Manufacturer Liability Increases with Truss Broker Involvement

by Kent J. Pagel

Beware of the additional liability you assume when going into business with a truss broker!

Imagine that a "truss broker" approaches your company with the opportunity to manufacture to the truss designs done by someone else. You convince yourself that the shop needs the extra work and your overtaxed design department will enjoy the break, so you agree. A few days later your production supervisor complains that the truss designs are poorly done, but given your low margins on this job, you simply tell him to do his best. Weeks later, you receive a demand from the project owner complaining of both truss design deficiencies and manufacturing defects. Given these claims, you are not paid for the trusses you manufactured. You also learn the truss broker has essentially no assets and no insurance; thus the project owner is expecting you to fully compensate him for his losses.

How likely is this type of scenario? Some manufacturers who have agreed to manufacture for "truss brokers" are finding themselves in such predicaments. This is one of the reasons WTCA adopted its

"Component Design and Manufacturing" policy (the "Policy"). In this article I will talk about the Policy, but I also make the case that: (1) those who buy components, and the owners of projects where components are used, are not best served when the component design and manufacturing is undertaken by more than one company as exemplified by the use of "truss brokers"; AND (2) component manufacturers' liability risk grows exponentially if they manufacture to designs done by others.

When referring to "truss brokers," I am referring to those who sell components to builders, contractors, and/or lumberyards, yet they maintain no manufacturing facility. With regard to design, they either carry out the design and placement of the components themselves or hire out such work to third parties, often dividing the work among various persons. After such design work is completed, they shop the designs to manufacturers for the lowest bid. (See Figure 1.)

The Policy, which was ratified by the WTCA Board of Directors in October 2002, reads:

The construction industry is not best served, and the component manufacturing industry will be harmed, if [component design software products] are leased to, sold to, licensed to or used by any person or entity that does not design, manufacture and sell components. The [component design software products] should therefore only be used by licensed component manufacturers for their own design, manufacturing and sale of structural components. Excluded from this policy would be any sale and design companies who sell and design components only for a particular component manufacturer under contract or any design companies who design components only for a particular component manufacturer under contract. In such cases the licenses to use the [component design software products] should contain appropriate restrictions.

Continued on page 70

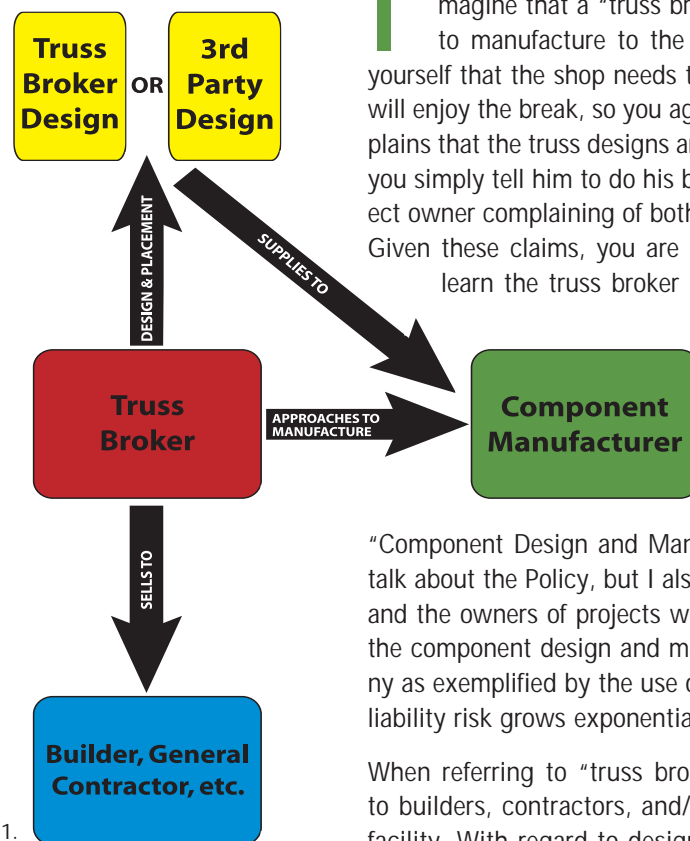


Figure 1.

## at a glance

- ❑ Builders, contractors and lumberyards who buy components are not best served when the component design and manufacturing is undertaken by more than one company.
- ❑ "Truss brokers" sell components to builders, contractors, and/or lumberyards but maintain no manufacturing facility. They either carry out component design and placement or hire it out to third parties.
- ❑ Component manufacturers' liability risk grows exponentially if they manufacture to designs created by others.



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# economics:

...components are value-added products and component manufacturers should continue to enjoy better than industry average margins when they perform both the design and manufacturing. Take away the design function, and manufacturers may find themselves ultimately becoming commodity producers.

## Component Manufacturer Liability...

Continued from page 68

The Policy's guiding principle is that **component manufacturers** are better off if they do both the design and manufacturing. The driver here is obviously economics; components are value-added products and component manufacturers should continue to enjoy better than industry average margins when they perform both the design and manufacturing. Take away the design function, and manufacturers may find themselves ultimately becoming commodity producers.

The Policy also states the **construction industry** is not being best served when the same company is not carrying out both the design and manufacture of components. The term **construction industry** refers to those who purchase components as well as the owners of projects where components are used. And while this is not specifically stated in the Policy, I submit that many manufacturers who choose to manufacture to the designs of others mistakenly believe they have less liability, when in fact they most likely have greater liability. It is with respect to these two points—customers and project owners not being best served and manufacturers assuming increased liability—that I want to direct our focus.

## Manufacturing Mistakes & Increased Manufacturer Liability

Whenever design and manufacturing are separated between more than one company, inherent when the truss broker model is employed, this disconnect may lead to components manufactured in different ways than the truss design engineer intended or increased manufacturing mistakes. Components that have been incorrectly manufactured are problematic for everyone in this equation. And for the customer, more manufacturing problems translate into greater project expenses, more delays, and increased liability.

## Why Does the Disconnect Lead to Manufacturing Problems?

When another person or entity (or multiple persons or entities) are involved in component design, they may not even know who the manufacturer will be. Even if they do know, they may have no knowledge of the manufacturer's:

- equipment and manufacturing processes used
- lumber raw material commonly used and in inventory
- connector plate type and sizes in inventory
- required design modifications which are dependent on truss plant handling, delivery and jobsite handling

Not knowing this information can easily lead to manufacturing mistakes. Also, dropping the proverbial "ball" in communicating critical information is more likely given that there are more people involved in the chain of information flow. The more mistakes, sometimes multiple mistakes on the same project, the less likely that traditional

safety factors can prevent failure and liability. As to the manufacturer's liability, it goes without saying that when the probability of manufacturing mistakes increases, so too does the manufacturer's liability!

## Design Mistakes & Increased Manufacturer Liability

When this disconnect between design and manufacturing exists, there is also the increased chance for design mistakes to occur. There are many reasons for this. First, the manufacturer has very little incentive to catch any design mistakes because it is only being paid to manufacture. Also, consider the training and experience of truss brokers as compared to component manufacturers. For example, how many truss brokers use only trained and certified technicians? How many truss brokers are as experienced as component manufacturers and have learned the need to impose checks and balances in the design process to minimize the occurrence of design mistakes? It is also quite likely the truss brokers or those they hire to do truss and component design are inadequately capitalized and uninsured. How many truss brokers have abundant assets or any kind of insurance? I conclude that when the probability of design mistakes goes up, so too does the manufacturer's liability! Be warned that those who assert claims invariably will look to the deeper pockets of the manufacturer.

## Who Warrants WHAT to the Customer?

When design and manufacturing are done by more than one company, what warranty or other recourse will customers have if there is a mistake either in the design or manufacturing? Those doing the designs, who as we have seen may have very little in terms of assets, will most certainly lay blame on the manufacturing procedures and process. The manufacturer will in turn blame those doing the designs. Where does this leave the customer? Most likely the customer is not well served in these circumstances. Plus, won't the customer try to find an avenue of recourse against the manufacturer who has assets and insurance in place? Once again, this is a major reason why the manufacturer's liability is greater when it manufactures to another's designs.

Continued on page 72

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## Component Manufacturer Liability...

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### Real-life Example

I will now refer to an actual example to illustrate the points discussed above. This example was still unfolding at the time this article was written and is the subject of litigation. Here are the facts as they are set forth in the pleadings filed in the litigation:

- Manufacturer A submits bid to Contractor for the sale of trusses and components for a multi-family project (the "Project").

- Contractor rejects Manufacturer A's bid and purchases the trusses and components from Manufacturer B.
- The truss and component design is undertaken by multiple persons and companies under the direction of the Truss Broker.
- The Truss Broker, apparently unable to find qualified truss technicians, solicits technicians who were either working for or had worked for Manufacturer A. These technicians in turn used Manufacturer A's licensed component design software which had been licensed to Manufacturer A by Connector Company X. This software is used in violation of the terms and conditions of Connector Company X's software license (which I discuss in more detail in the sidebar). Essentially the technicians working for the Truss Broker have "pirated" the software in exchange for a fee paid to them by the Truss Broker.
- The designs worked on by the technicians are submitted to a local truss design engineer who seals the truss and component design drawings. The engineer had been sponsored by Connector Company X to prepare truss and component design drawings and seal them for designated manufacturers including Manufacturer A, but Manufacturer B was not one of the designated manufacturers.
- Manufacturer B in turn manufactured the trusses and components per the sealed truss design drawings.
- Since Manufacturer B was not a connector plate user of Connector Company X, Manufacturer B used connector plates from Connector Company Y. Manufacturer B failed to: (a) re-run the truss and component design drawings, (b) undertake any type of conversion analysis, and/or (c) seek the approval of either the Contractor or the Project Owner as to the change in connector plates. Furthermore, since different lumber inventories were maintained by Manufacturer B, different lumber sizes and grades were used in manufacturing.
- Further negatively affecting the project, Manufacturer B failed to build to the specifications and tolerances stated in the approved truss and component designs.
- It was also ultimately discovered that many of the truss and component designs worked on by one or more of the

truss technicians utilized by the Truss Broker were deficient in many respects.

In summary, all of the mistakes that occurred in the example are directly attributable to the involvement of a Truss Broker and the fact that the design and manufacturing of the components was undertaken by more than one company.

**How was all of this uncovered?** For some strange reason Manufacturer A's name was boldly placed on many of the drawings at the Project. This led to further inquiries and all of this was brought to the attention of the Project Owner and the Project Engineer of Record. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of dollars will need to be expended in engineering analyses, in the subsequent repair of the components, in attorneys' fees, and to reimburse the Project Owner for delays. As a consequence, the Project Owner has held back money due the Contractor and in turn the Contractor has held back hundreds of thousands of dollars invoiced by Manufacturer B for the components. One lawsuit has been filed thus far by Manufacturer A, and it would not surprise anyone involved if more lawsuits are filed in the future.

**How could all of this have been avoided?** Quite simply, had the Contractor purchased trusses designed and manufactured by Manufacturer A, none of this would have occurred.

**Who has been harmed the most?** The Contractor—the company purchasing the components as well as the Project Owner for whom the Contractor was building the Project—and Manufacturer B who was not paid! Others harmed include Manufacturer A, who lost the income that it would have received from this project and any downstream work that would have been generated because of this project.

Additionally, this project has thrown a spotlight on the reputation of the wood truss industry, because no one had anticipated that the mismatching of component designs and manufacturing could possibly happen to this degree. Fortunately, these mistakes were discovered prior to completion and occupancy. Had they been discovered years later, the damages could have soared to include not only the cost of correcting the deficiencies, but also the cost of vacating the tenants/occupants, alternative housing and related costs, and even personal injuries.

Again, tort lawyers tend to sue the people with money even if 99 percent of the defect was caused by the Truss Brokers. The best protection against litigation liabilities is through what is referred to as loss avoidance, preventing defects in the first place. Defects are minimized by avoiding the types of business arrangement I have discussed in which there were several extra middlemen involved in the business transaction. This leads to poor communication and quality control, which generally presents a good foundation for litigation. **SBC**

*Kent J. Pagel is the President and Senior Shareholder of Pagel, Davis & Hill, a professional corporation. He also serves as the outside counsel for WTCA.*

## sidebar:

In this article I spoke to some of the "boilerplate" terms that are commonly found in truss design software license agreements. It is important to manufacturer licensees to abide by these terms both from a business and legal perspective.

The truss and component design and placement software is made available to component manufacturers—the licensees—through license agreements. These license agreements all contain restrictions which exist for good reason. Those who own the component design software—the licensors—do not want the value of their intellectual property to be diluted. If it is, there is less economic incentive in the future for licensors to invest in the further development of their intellectual property. That result would hurt the entire industry.

The licensors may also have concerns as to their own liability—in other words, if the software is operated by persons unknown to the licensor or by those who are untrained as they are not associated for example with a component manufacturer, this may place unwanted liability on the licensor. For these reasons, such license agreements contain restrictions that are usually found in the terms and conditions section of the license agreement.

Restrictions that are commonly included:

- The software may not be sublicensed, resold or distributed by the person or company to whom it is licensed (the licensee) for any purpose whatsoever.
- The software may be limited for use to the component manufacturer's own review, design and sealing of truss and component designs generated by such software and for no other purpose whatsoever.
- The software and all copies of the software are to be treated as the confidential and trade secret property of the licensee, which may include taking measures to cause employees to preserve the confidentiality of such software.
- The software may not be used, distributed or in any way divulged to any other person by the licensee.

Component manufacturers and software licensors need to be vigilant with regard to Truss Brokers to make sure design and placement software are not used in violation of the license agreements. **SBC**



**WTCA**<sup>TM</sup>  
 Northeast Chapter

*Unites over Building Labeling Legislation in Maine*

by Melanie Birkeland

Teamwork prevailed as one chapter fought to defeat a potentially destructive bill in Maine.

**W**hen the old and recurring issue of building labeling for the fire service recently arose in Maine, it was met with a united front. The Northeast Chapter (WTCA-NE) and WTCA staff have been working together as a team for many months on the issue in the New England marketplace.

George Sprowl of Sprowl Building Components Inc., Searsmont, ME, got the ball rolling by calling WTCA staff to let them know about Maine Bill 1879, "An Act to Enhance Firefighter Safety," scheduled to be considered by the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee on January 23. George realized that the bill proposed to label all commercial buildings containing wood truss construction, so he acted quickly to get the word out.

In short order, WTCA staff began calling chapter members in concert with WTCA-NE President John Goodrich of Truss Engineering Corp, Indian Orchard, MA, to inform them of the proposed legislation and to find volunteers to attend the hearing, making sure that our industry's voice and policies would be heard in the midst of this legislative process.

Staff and John asked for help from the members of WTCA-NE. Josh Bartlett of Wood Structures in Biddeford, ME and Rick Dube from Mainely Truss in Fairfield, ME responded to represent the chapter and industry at the committee hearing. Along with WTCA staff, the chapter members began formulating thoughts, ideas and arguments to present at the hearing. The team also put together a package of educational materials that included:

- *Wood Truss Construction and Fire Performance* CD produced by the Carbeck Structural Component Institute (CSCI)
- A CSCI brochure
- A reprint of the January/February *SBC Magazine* article, "Education & Awareness Leads to 'Truss Truce'"
- Firefighter statistics from the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB)

The package was to be given to all committee members. The WTCA-NE/WTCA team's goal was to educate the committee on the best facts that we have available to us regarding the fire and structural performance of trusses and work toward dispelling any misconceptions there may be.

When wood truss construction is singled out as the only type of construction that needs to be labeled or highlighted, the result can be harmful for both the fire service and component manufacturers. Because of myth-based implications on truss construction, labeling can provide the fire service with a false sense of security because they may view unlabeled buildings as being safer to enter when it is really the building's contents that cause true life-safety hazards. ME Bill 1879 was presented to the committee as a firefighter safety proposal, implying that firefighters need to be warned any time they enter a building framed with trusses in commercial structures.

Based on solid preparation, Josh began the argument at the hearing by stating, "For every regulation and statute, there are consequences. Some intended, some not." He explained the fact that wood trusses are used in more than half of all new structures being built in Maine, and that passing this bill would result in less affordable construction, since the building codes in the area are difficult to meet without using structural building component products. He also brought to light that the structural building components industry provides local jobs and pointed out that if our industry was threatened, local jobs would also be threatened. He drove home the message that the industry takes firefighter safety very seriously, but that the facts just aren't there to prove that truss construction is more harmful to firefighters than any other structural framing member. "This bill will put a 'scarlet letter' on any building with trusses," Josh said, and WTCA's policy is that if building labels are legislated in a given area, firefighters would be much safer if every building was appropriately labeled.

During the committee hearing, several panel members referenced the NIOSH report, a document that WTCA was involved in providing feedback and draft reviews. The NIOSH report is the first report on the topic of fire performance of trusses that has listed the contributions of Frank Brannigan

and Vincent Dunn, while also treating wood trusses fairly. This report integrates WTCA's facts and policies and WTCA is referenced appropriately. (For more information on the NIOSH report or fire-related issues visit [www.carbeck.org](http://www.carbeck.org).)

At the next WTCA-NE meeting, the chapter reviewed the details of the committee hearing and discussed the upcoming meeting scheduled with the Fire Chief's Association of Maine. Not long after the two meetings took place, a work session was held in Augusta, ME on February 10. John volunteered to accompany Josh to the work session where they were able to act as the WTCA team's voice. In preparation for the hearing, John, Josh and staff held several teleconfer-

Continued on page 76

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## Policy Regarding Building Labeling

Committee: Legislative

WTCA supports making a positive effort to promote universal building labeling of ALL types of construction to help the fire service in early size-up identification of a building on fire on the fire ground.

WTCA supports making a positive effort to promote universal building labeling, provided that the law as written does not discriminate against wood truss, related engineered wood construction, or any other form of construction. In other words, all structural elements, whether wood, steel or concrete based, that are used in building construction should be labeled in a systematic and quickly understandable manner.

WTCA will support legislation, provided that WTCA is involved in writing the bill and in the legislative process ensuring that the law is applied uniformly to all building types.

Computerized Pre-Fire Planning is WTCA's preference over building labeling within cities and communities. This type of program would create a database on each building and the summary pre-fire plan would be able to be downloaded to the fire chief on the way to a fire for use in developing fire ground tactics. WTCA understands that this type of technology is not readily available to all fire jurisdictions, so in those cases labeling might be the preferred method.

WTCA will advocate and support the development of computerized pre-fire planning programs as the best method for pre-fire planning. The truss industry can facilitate this with its expertise in construction industry computer technology.

For more information on pre-fire planning and an example of language WTCA would find acceptable for building labeling visit [Support Docs](#) at [www.sbcmag.info](http://www.sbcmag.info).

## WTCA-NE Unites over Building Labeling...

Continued from page 75

ences to solidify a proactive and united industry approach to help defeat or modify the direction of the bill. John explains the value of working as a team by saying, "It was very helpful to have a conference call before the meeting simply to ensure that all attending the work session were on the same page. The last thing you want is to be representing the industry and not appear to be organized and professional." John and Josh said that they felt more prepared for the work session by simply touching base with the staff to get perspective on these issues and to have a venue to build off of each others points of view, to formulate a common sense approach.

The work session was a huge success and contributed to the final outcome of the Maine Legislature dropping the bill indefinitely. Through the dedication of the WTCA-NE/WTCA team, our voice as an industry was heard, and it was heard loud and clear!

Even so, this was not the only battle for the Northeast Chapter. A similar bill, like several in the past, has been introduced again in the Massachusetts legislature.

Building labeling is an issue that may continue to resurface, but teamwork and effective communication allows us to communicate about and hopefully change the false perceptions of our products and industry. To that end, the connection between local chapters and WTCA staff is of critical importance to ensure the vast resources of our entire association are being utilized.

Because each state reacts differently to bill proposals about firefighter safety and building labeling, it is important to be sensitive to each situation as it surfaces. As proposals emerge, they need to be treated with a level of understanding within the local area in which they are presented. Each proposal is complex and requires customized solutions using the knowledge that the industry has acquired over the years.

While more and more local chapters adopt the view of keeping their "eyes on the ground," and monitoring their local issues, staff will continue to help support and solidify forward progress for them and our industry as a whole. By communicating locally and with staff, we can ensure more victories like this in the future. "The first step in strengthening our presence is by acting locally. Local chapter members need to monitor their local issues so that other chapter members can draw from their experiences when a similar bill is proposed in their area. It will then ultimately give us the most strength and power for proactive action," John explains as he reflects back on the experience of the hearing, the meetings, and the work session. Each time we work together and each time we prevail, we will continue to strengthen our position in the marketplace. **SBC**



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*verb*

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# Automation

## straight talk

by Jerry Koskovich, P.E.

### Mechanical Morale Boosters

Automation doesn't just do things *for* people. It does things *to* people.

**S**ome years ago I recall bringing a friend from outside the industry into a truss plant to demonstrate our automated component saw. My friend, while familiar with manufacturing and distribution plants (his company employed about 250 people), had never been in a component manufacturing plant before.

The gantry tables were first in sight and we stopped to watch them. Workers were on the table tacking the connector plates, which I explained. We had to step back several times to make way for component-loaded carts to wheel through. Then I took him to the cutting area. He kept looking this way and that along the tour.

I knew what I was seeing, but I had no idea what he was seeing until we went to lunch. He described the truss building scenario we witnessed from a little different perspective—people “leaping on and off tables,” periodically getting down on their knees and beating things with a hammer, railroad carts with “colored tin cans” on their handles “squeaking” by. His comments were not critical or belittling, but more an expression of surprise.

He didn't realize how far our industry had already come in such a short time. And maybe I didn't appreciate how far behind we still were in some ways. He concluded that insurance rates had to be sky high and that it must have been tough to keep good workers. His prophecy was that the kind of automation we were involved in would make a world of difference in a truss plant when it came to employee morale and overall employee performance. At the time, I can't say I gave it that much thought.

Now I'm here to tell you that the biggest unforeseen benefit of automation in component manufacturing plants is probably just that—increased employee morale and the improved employee performance that comes from it. I'm not talking about some “fuzzy,” motivational poster type of benefits. I'm talking about fundamental benefits that begin to show up in bottom lines from the get-go.

I'll tell you what I've observed and the comments I've received with regard to the installation of automated equipment. I suspect manufacturers of other automated equipment for component manufacturing plants hear and experience similar things.

- **The morale boosting starts the minute the new piece of automated equipment hits the receiving dock.** Typically, all eyes turn to it. The mere fact that a company is installing a several hundred thousand dollar saw says they're going places, they're enhancing the operation, business is strong and committed. In a nutshell, workers can see that they're working for a progressive company. Also, with anything new and maybe especially in truss plants where technology is just making a big leap in automation, there's a wave of excitement that reverberates through the plant.

Continued on page 82

#### at a glance

- His prophecy was that the kind of automation we were involved in would make a world of difference in a truss plant when it came to employee morale and overall employee performance.
- When you install a new piece of equipment like an automated saw, your plant will perk up in ways you likely hadn't anticipated.



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S O U T H E R N P I N E : Y O U R C H O I C E F O R C O M P O N E N T S

- **Old sawyers get new life.** For some dyed-in-the-wool sawyers, the new automated saw will represent a threat and “too much learnin’.” But that’s the exception and substantially outweighed by just the opposite attitude. Most good sawyers will welcome automation as a way to simplify and improve the quality of their work. Their performance improves. I’ve been told by many a plant that their workers vie to operate the new equipment.
- **Producing higher quality work simply makes you feel better.** I’m sure a psychologist would have fancier terms for this but, put simply, we all like to do a good job and feel better about ourselves and everything around us when we do. A properly maintained automated saw turns out consistently spot-on perfect parts (allowing for the effects of less-than perfect lumber)—you can’t help but feel good about what you’re producing. Contributing to the “I’m-doing-a-good-job” feeling are easy-to-read part markings applied by the saw’s ink-jet printer (ID numbers, job numbers, etc.) There’s never any debate over incorrect and/or scribbled, hard-to-decipher markings. All said, when you’re consistently producing near-perfect parts, you like what you’re doing and your performance reflects it.
- **The same attitude begins to permeate the plant.** It’s like throwing a rock in a pond at the automated saw station and watching the ripples move out. When the cut parts get to the truss table or assembly station and builders can decipher the markings without a struggle, when parts fit together like they should, and—on top of all that—there aren’t any missing parts, the truss and panel builders start feeling better about the quality of their work. There are fewer errors (and less finger-pointing), and there’s a lot more predictability in their build routines. It all goes quicker and easier.
- **A safer environment and employees know it.** With the ability of some automated saws to cut even very small parts (down to several inches) and all-but-infinitely long scarf cuts, pull saws and chop saws start gathering dust. Workers know the plant has a concern for their safety because more and more cutting is being pulled off these types of manual saws. Employees may not express it; it may even be subconscious, but hazardous conditions can be the source of underlying apprehension that manifests itself in the form of irritability, frustration and reduced production.
- **We all like to be proud of our job, and running a quarter-million-dollar piece of high tech equipment is something to be proud of.** I still remember the time my mother judged me worthy of taking the wheel of our '37 Ford. I’ve experienced similar feelings throughout my life when I’ve been put in the driver’s seat, so to speak, of everything from expensive development projects to expert witness testimony. Operators of an expensive new high-

tech saw have every right to be proud and, most often, it shows—in renewed dedication and day-to-day performance. I suspect the better attitude goes home with him, too.

- **Production reports become scorecards—and good employees are always trying to increase their scores.** An automated saw monitors its production and produces reports—how much lumber was processed, how many components were cut, etc. These reports can be immensely valuable to management. They also have the side benefit of giving saw operators goals to shoot for. I’ve known operators who were effectively racing against other saws in the plant. I’ve also known operators who race against themselves—trying to better their “score” over yesterday’s or last week’s. Production benefits are obvious.
- **As the new automated saw impacts component production, other steps in the truss or panel-building process naturally pick up in pace.** I cannot say definitively why this occurs, but it typically does. Obviously, a consistent flow of accurately cut parts is underlying everything—no more mis-cuts, re-cuts, and forgot-to-cuts. And at least part of the stepped-up production pace outside the cutting area could be due to the fact that the slower manual cutting had previously been setting the plant’s pace. It could also be due to the natural human phenomena of not wanting to be one who’s holding things up as the flow of cut components increases, so you almost subconsciously work more efficiently. This is not to say that you won’t create new bottlenecks—really just amplify existing bottlenecks, typically in the assembly area—when you increase cutting by multiples with a new automated saw.

In sum, when you install a new piece of equipment like an automated saw, your plant will perk up in ways you likely hadn’t anticipated. The whole work atmosphere is impacted—the result of more predictable production, consistently higher quality product, fewer mistakes and finger-pointing, and improved safety. Put simply, everyone feels better about what they’re doing, how they’re doing it, and how well it turns out. With the installation of additional automated equipment, which usually follows quickly when automation benefits begin to hit a company’s bottom line, all of the above is amplified and is even more securely embedded in a plant’s working atmosphere.

I recognize that, as a manufacturer of automated equipment myself, these comments could be interpreted by some as contrived to suit my own ends. On the contrary, and perhaps because I am an engineer and often blind to things that cannot be rendered to a blueprint (remember blueprints?), some of these benefits came as a surprise to me, too. Actually, it was more a series of small surprises along the way...unlike my friend that I mentioned up front. He got it in one big surprise. **SBC**

*Jerry Koskovich is President of The Koskovich Company in Rochester, MN.*

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**Risk Management**

**Featuring Nancy Frush**

**New ORLEANS**

Friday, March 24

Topics like holism and emergency preparedness were big hits in New Orleans.

**at a glance**

- Risk management consultant Nancy Frush embraces a concept called holism.
- Nancy encourages component manufacturers to be proactive by holding health workshops to encourage healthy living habits.
- Nancy teaches that management figures should be leaders who set examples, admit when they are wrong, and are honest and caring about the employees.
- Barriers in the workplace are created by placing too much focus on titles.

The WTCA Regional Workshop & Conference (RWC) on Human Resources and Risk Management took place in New Orleans on Friday, March 24, featuring Nancy Frush as the guest speaker. Attendees received a binder with information and resources, including a section devoted to the topics and worksheets that Nancy used in her presentation. Her worksheets were complete with diagrams and checklists to illustrate her points.

Nancy's message is one that stresses the importance of "other-directedness." The people working for you are the most valuable asset. Gaining their trust and loyalty is a key to operating a successful, cost-efficient business. When working with people, Nancy always recommends "relating to them on their level."

Nancy's approach to managing risk is focused on the concept of holism—that an organic or integrated whole has a reality independent of and greater than the sum of its parts. Simply stated: each person is equal, valuable, unique and deserving of respect. An employee is not just an employee. He or she is a person, first and foremost, who has a life outside of work (believe it or not!). The term "employee" only defines one aspect of a human being. People are more complex than that. Nancy suggests we avoid "pigeon-holing" employees into a position by not using titles and changing our management techniques.

Attendee Kayla Gary, HR & Safety Director of Sentry Building Components, agreed with the concept. "Holism is so right. There was a time that I didn't feel like we were treating our employees as if they were part of the company and we have been trying to change that. Nancy reinforced that we are doing the right thing," she said.

The day started with an invigorating group stretch led by Nancy to demonstrate how to encourage employees to adopt healthy lifestyle habits that carry over into the workplace. Rather than react to health conditions after they become a problem, Nancy encourages component manufacturers be proactive by holding health workshops (blood pressure and cholesterol screening, flu shots, and non-smoking workshops are a few examples) to encourage healthy living habits. One of Nancy's "frush" ideas is that every shift should begin with a ten-minute stretch in order to follow that proactive approach to employee health. As this example suggests, her

by Emmy Thorson-Hanson



Nancy Frush in action during her presentation on Risk Management at the RWC in New Orleans.

approach to managing risk is a bit unorthodox. Now it is time to "stretch" your definition of risk management as we explore the innovative ideas that Nancy says will add green to your bottom line.

To understand Nancy's approach, it helps to know a little bit about her. She has a degree in psychology and started her career as a case worker. Nancy's job was to help whoever walked in the door. No matter what their situation was, she was willing to do whatever it took to connect those in need with the services that would help them.

Nancy says one of the most important lessons she learned as a social worker was about artificial barriers. She recalls attending the training session that would influence her future. "We learned how to knock down artificial barriers, and in turn I learned how to relate to people at all levels of the community. It is important to break down both physical and psychological barriers," she says. In her opinion, artificial barriers are also present where we work. "One way we create barriers in the workplace is by placing too much focus on titles. Managers should not receive preferential treatment such as a special parking spot. Everyone is equal," she says.

Another valuable lesson experience that shaped Nancy was a project in a training class. "We had to write our own obituary. It really made me think about what impact I am going to have on this world. I realized that you need to be aware of what message you are sending out. When you walk away or someone leaves you, what impression have you left on them?" she asked.

Nancy began her presentation by defining risk management as the task of reducing the cost of doing business—to "plug all the holes where the company is losing cash." According to Nancy, there are two types of risk. There is human behavior risk, which involves risks caused by employees, management or external

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Larry Rogers (Rogers Manufacturing), Scott Ward (Southern Components) and Ken Kirsch (Truswal Systems) discuss the presentation during a break.



Nancy (center) with Kayla Gary and Terry Leopold of Sentry Building Components in Jennings, LA.

forces. These risks include attendance, injuries, policy violations, equipment damage, productivity and quality control, to name a few. Natural risk, in contrast, includes natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes and fires.

Natural risks are beyond your control; the only thing you can do is take meas-

ures to minimize the damage they cause. Nancy defines risk as being all-inclusive in its nature and "so much more than safety." Her procedure for evaluating risk management is to identify all areas where a company is "bleeding" cash. Throughout the workshop, attendees learned methods for implementing money-saving ideas into their risk management plans while learning to view their employees in a whole new light.

**"The Key Is How You Treat & View Your Employees"**

According to Nancy, the best way to manage the human behavior side of risk is to value each individual and see them as a person, not just an employee. Since it is directly involved with human behavior risk, Nancy talked about the human resources aspect of risk management, wasting no time in weaving in holism.

Most manufacturers might assume that the biggest challenge facing their company are issues involving employee behavior, rather than looking at the bigger picture of what has caused them to act out. She explained how it can be harmful to focus too much on employee behavior rather than management behavior. Nancy teaches that management should be leaders who set examples, admit when they are wrong, and are honest and caring about the employees. She believes that management should not "be in charge" of employees because this creates a feeling of inequality that can result in lower morale. Instead, management should be viewed as a source of guidance and support for employees, leaving the employee feeling more responsible and valued.

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### Risk Management Featuring Nancy Frush

Continued from page 85

Nancy also discussed motivation. Her theory is that people are motivated by an inner drive or impulse, or are aiming for an incentive or goal. Nancy stressed that money is not generally a motivator, but if people feel appreciated and enjoy coming to work they will do a better job. "People work hard because they care!" she exclaimed. If all of their basic needs are being met (salary, safety, security), she asserted, then they will feel compelled to work harder and better for you. This will improve quality, productivity/efficiency and absentee rates, areas where money "bleeds" out.

### Safety Committee, HM Stauffer

The second topic of the seminar dealt with Workers' Compensation and Safety Committees, a topic with which Nancy is all too familiar.

The best defense against injuries and workers' compensation pay-outs is to not have injuries in the first place, which goes hand in hand with Nancy's "proactive, not reactive" approach. "There is no such thing as common sense!" Nancy declared, receiving laughs from attendees. Although you can't prevent people from doing stupid things, you can take steps to ensure that they are more thoughtful, she said. Creating a safety committee to combat these hazards can save massive amounts of money, and it also feeds into her concept of success through holism.

Take H.M. Stauffer & Sons, a manufacturer in Leola, PA. With workers' compensation costs of \$457,000 a year, the company was well on its way to bankruptcy. As Stauffer's HR director at the time, Nancy developed a safety program that would get the company back on track. Along with developing a modified work program, the company instituted a safety committee that proactively encouraged safe behavior in the workplace by creating a caring and incentive-filled atmosphere. As a result H.M. Stauffer saved so much money in insurance premiums and workers' comp payouts that they were able to take employees on reward trips. In August 2003, after reaching 2.25 million hours with no work time lost to injury, they took employees on a trip to an all-inclusive Mexican resort. The trip cost less than half of their former worker's compensation payouts. Kayla Gary admires the initiative Nancy took in re-creating the

safety program at H.M. Stauffer: "She carried out what needed to be done, and followed through once she got started. A lot of people may talk about improving their safety programs but never get around to it. She made it happen and I respect anyone who can do that." Nancy helped H.M. Stauffer turn workers' comp into a win-win situation, saving valuable time and money. (To read the full article on H.M. Stauffer's successful safety program from the January/February 2004 issue of *SBC Magazine*, visit the "Past Issues" section at [www.sbcmag.info](http://www.sbcmag.info).)

"In a standard [component manufacturing] business, typically net profitability is three percent bottom line. This can

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-Dave Motter,  
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### Roundtable on Emergency Preparedness in Hurricane-Devastated New Orleans

A third topic covered during the seminar was Emergency Preparedness. In fact, it is for this purpose that this workshop was held in New Orleans, devastated in August 2005 by Hurricane Katrina. Nancy identified three types of emergencies: natural disasters (hurricanes, tornadoes, floods), man-made disasters and outside sources (terrorist attacks). In order to ensure that component manufacturers' businesses and employees will survive a major catastrophe, it is of utmost importance to be prepared in case of an emergency and have a plan that will preserve lives.

"The roundtable made emergency preparedness all the more real because of it being in New Orleans and everyone having experiences with hurricanes or some sort of disaster," explained Don Cook, Risk Manager for Razor Component Systems, Inc. "People shared their opinions and it was interesting to hear what they had done to prepare, and what preventative methods worked and what didn't."

Planning ahead as to who would be in charge is a good first step along with practicing good habits. Training, such as practice drills and a review of plans, can make the difference in the end. Cook said he plans to analyze his company's disaster plan by "checking to make sure things are in order, and then staging a trial run."

In addition to keeping up with emergency preparedness, keep in mind another resource as we head into the 2006 hurricane season. An online forum for WTCA members called **M2M: Members Helping Members** was created following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. WTCA's **M2M** serves as a clearinghouse to connect those in our industry who need assistance with those who can lend a helping hand. Component manufacturers and other WTCA members affected by unfortunate events such as natural disasters, accidents or tragedies can use **M2M** to report any specific needs they have for their company and their employees. In turn, members wishing to give assistance can use **M2M** to find the most effective and efficient way to help fellow members. Or use the forum to exchange ideas about emergency preparedness best practices. Visit [www.sbcindustry.com/m2mforum.php](http://www.sbcindustry.com/m2mforum.php) to participate. **SBC**

### Risk Management Featuring Nancy Frush Continued from page 86

easily double if they do what I say," claims Nancy. "Absentee, turnover, and injury rates all drop. Fewer managers are needed to worry about employees because the employees will self-manage. Quality will increase due to improved employee morale and insurance premiums will go down. The list goes on and on."

Attendees reviewed OSHA forms and learned how to fill them out accurately. Nancy stressed the importance of having a safety policy and system that everyone adheres to. "By having a policy and following all rules and forms, you will protect your company and not allow for any falsification where you would lose money." One of the most important things to remember about policies is that everyone must follow them. "Nancy brought up issues with respect to OSHA compliance and forms that I was somewhat aware of but not really sure on. She was very thorough," commented Sentry's Terry Leopold. "It was helpful to listen to other manufacturers with the same problems and what they have tried. And... Nancy's suggestions were very helpful."

#### Conclusion

The 2006 RWC was a definite hit. On an evaluation form, one attendee wrote, "All of the information was helpful. Excellent ideas to take back to work and utilize." Attendees left the workshop with a new perspective on risk management and armed with the knowledge and resources to put the information to use in their businesses to ultimately impact their bottom line. "This was one of the most informative and helpful seminars that I have ever attended. I strongly recommend this workshop to everyone in our industry," wrote Scott Ward of Southern Components, Inc.

Nancy's ideas are gaining popularity among manufacturers; the Southern Nevada Component Manufacturers Association is planning to host a seminar for those who missed New Orleans. Kayla Gary offered reasons as to why manufacturers find Nancy so captivating. "She is so animated and so enthusiastic about the content she's presented that she brings you right into it with her."

Nancy's message is simple: *Love your employees.* "Nobody's children are perfect, and even when your children make mistakes, you never stop loving them," says Nancy. "You always want the best for them, and try to guide them in the right direction. If employers treat their employees like this, they will see the benefits in their bottom line."

Nancy asserts that if by making an effort to live according to these ideals and embrace holism, manufacturers will prosper while saving money, making success that much more golden. **SBC**

*For details about setting up a seminar with Nancy Frush, contact WTCA staff at 608/274-4849. To view a demo of WTCA's new online risk management training program, ORisk, go to [www.sbcindustry.com/orisk.php](http://www.sbcindustry.com/orisk.php).*

# thank you

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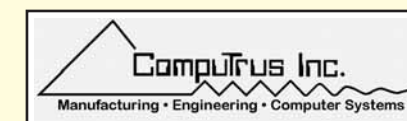
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#### In a nutshell ...

Servo-Omni has coupled the pinnacle of measuring and movement-control technology ... with machine-tool-precision.

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Our technicians can now Internet access and perform diagnostics on customer saws right from our facility. Software upgrades are Internet-downloadable. Saw and operator performance can be monitored remotely in real time. And operators can select either English or Spanish.

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For over 20 years now, we've made performance enhancements available to our Auto-Omni customers in the form of field upgrades ... such that even our oldest Auto-Omni can be made as capable as a new one. This time – since modifications are so extensive that an Auto-Omni cannot be field-enhanced to a Servo-Omni – we're offering the "ULTIMATE UPGRADE." For a fixed price, we'll truck a Servo-Omni to a customer, bring their old Auto-Omni back to our facility, and remanufacture it into an essentially-new Servo-Omni ... ready to fulfill the next customer's "Ultimate Upgrade."

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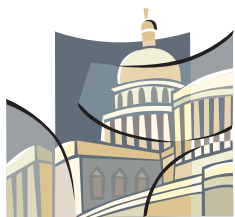
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## I'll Show You Mine

by Sean D. Shields

If you show me yours, I'll show you mine. This should be the new mantra of WTCA Chapters going forward—at least with regard to grassroots legislative advocacy. Since the first WTCA legislative conference in 2001, the structural building components industry has been shown the inside of lawmakers' offices full of big mahogany desks, plush leather chairs, expensive carpets and enough photographs of the who's who to make your head spin.

Now it's time to return the favor and concentrate on inviting lawmakers into your manufacturing facility. Time to show your elected officials pristine bundles of 2x4s, rows of busy component saws, gantry tables, roller presses and enough stacks of freshly built trusses to make *their* head spin. It is simply the most effective way to cement your company, and this industry, into their minds.

That is why, at the conclusion of this year's legislative conference, the WTCA Board of Directors chose to pass the following resolution:

Whereas the structural components industry is committed to developing a world-class grassroots legislative advocacy effort;

Whereas the information collected and disseminated by the structural building components industry has been well received by elected lawmakers and has contributed to a credible reputation for the industry;

Whereas experience has shown building closer relationships with elected lawmakers on the grassroots level gives the structural building components industry a stronger voice in the legislative process;

Whereas an increase in communication between the structural building components industry and lawmakers allows the industry to effect public policy in a way that is beneficial to the industry;

Whereas these relationships are best formed and solidified through direct contact between manufacturers and their lawmakers;

### The Board of Directors of WTCA resolves to:

Request that each of our WTCA chapters designate a Legislative Relations Chair, who will be the point of contact within the chapter on all legislative issues; and

Request that each of our WTCA chapters strive to schedule and host a minimum of two (2) plant tours each year for either federal, state or local elected lawmakers.

The creation of a Legislative Relations Chair (LRC) within the WTCA Chapter structure makes a great deal of sense. As former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Tip O'Neill, once said, "all politics is local politics." WTCA Chapters are the eyes and ears of this trade association, and are subsequently the best situated to identify key lawmakers and establish relationships with them.

In addition to plant tours, the LRC can assist in a wide variety of other essential legislative advocacy efforts. For instance, as WTCA continues to build a world-class grassroots legislative advocacy effort, the annual Legislative Conference is being augmented with Congressional District Meetings that can occur throughout the year. These meetings are set up with federal lawmakers as they return home during times when Congress is on recess. While WTCA staff would still assist in setting up the meetings, the LRC can help enlist component manufacturers to attend these meetings.

The LRC can also be a valuable point person for helping the Chapter to set up its own State Legislative Conference. These local conferences don't have to be complicated. As was discussed in the column earlier this year, the Iowa Truss Manufacturers Association (ITMA) has done this successfully for the last few years by simply inviting a handful of state lawmakers to attend one of their quarterly meetings held in their state capital. The LRC can provide the valuable service by extending those invitations on behalf of the Chapter.

Several members of the WTCA Board remarked at the conclusion of this year's legislative conference it was a lost opportunity that many chapters did not have representation during the many meetings occurring during the conference on Capitol Hill. They agreed the annual legislative conference in Washington, DC, was too valuable an endeavor to miss out on sending someone to speak on behalf of the members of a state. It was suggested by numerous Board members that every WTCA Chapter should try to send at least one representative, the newly appointed LRC perhaps, and to consider contributing chapter funds to defray their travel and room costs.

While these are just a few suggestions, it draws a clear picture there is a very real and immediate need for our industry to have an LRC in each of the WTCA Chapters to assist in these grassroots legislative advocacy efforts. It may sound daunting for some, but even if an LRC coordinated all of the activities above, the time commitment would be barely more than thirty minutes a month, and attendance at one WTCA Open Quarterly Meeting. Those who have rolled up their sleeves and participated in these efforts in the past have said it was well worth the effort. It's time for you to find out for yourself! **SBC**



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## Housing Starts

Housing starts continued their downward trend in April, falling 7.4 percent to 1.849 million (SAAR). Single-family starts fell 5.6 percent to 1.535 million (SAAR). Permits were also down, but a bit more modestly at 5.4 percent for starts and 4 percent for single-family.

U.S. Housing Starts			
Millions - Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rate (SAAR)			
U.S. Totals	Apr	Mar (rev.)	% Change
Starts	1.849	1.996	-7.4%
Permits	1.984	2.097	-5.4%
<b>Single Family</b>			
Starts	1.535	1.626	-5.6%
Permits	1.502	1.565	-4.0%
<b>Multi Family</b>			
Starts	0.314	0.370	-15.1%
Permits	0.482	0.532	-9.4%
Starts and Permits By Region:			
<b>NE</b> Starts	0.191	0.175	9.1%
Permits	0.189	0.209	-9.6%
<b>MW</b> Starts	0.349	0.300	16.3%
Permits	0.296	0.340	-12.9%
<b>S</b> Starts	0.863	1.027	-16.0%
Permits	0.994	1.045	-4.9%
<b>W</b> Starts	0.446	0.494	-9.7%
Permits	0.505	0.503	0.4%

**Analysis & Outlook:** Housing activity continues to trend modestly downward. It appears that markets are simply returning to more sustainable levels that are supported by basic demographic forces (estimated to be 1.7 - 1.9 million for conventional housing). We are still at the upper end of that range, but we're certainly getting closer to what most analysts would call "sustainable." In that respect, the fixed rate mortgage, although moving up to 6.58 percent, remains attractive by historical standards. The job picture continues to improve with the unemployment rate dropping below 5 percent and incomes are still increasing faster than inflation. The recent PPI report tells us that "core inflation" (excluding food and energy) remains "tame." Inflation should remain relatively tame; however, tighter labor markets and stronger manufacturing activity is becoming a growing concern with the Fed. Industrial production continues to strengthen with capacity utilization reaching 81.9 percent for all industry groups combined and 80.8 percent for the manufacturing sector—these are the highest rates since mid-2000. The latest National Assoc. of Realtors report indicates that existing home price growth is slowing in many metro areas. First quarter median prices were up 10.3 percent, year over year, for the U.S.; however, this was skewed by the 12 percent increase in the West with the rest of the country averaging a more modest 6.5 percent. An additional cooling sign is that both the inventory of new homes and existing homes is at a 5.5 month supply at current sale rates. In summary, this is still a solid housing market that is simply correcting to more sustainable levels, in the opinion of most analysts. Continue to watch inflation, however, as tightening labor markets, high energy and commodity prices, and a dollar that continues to weaken, will keep the Fed vigilant. **SBC**

This housing starts report is provided to **SBC** on a monthly basis by **SBC Economic Environment** columnist Al Schuler. Visit [www.sbcmag.info](http://www.sbcmag.info) for more economic news.



## Builder Banter

### Report Shows Use of Cordless Tools Decreases Accidents

Using cordless tools on jobsites reduces slips, trips and falls, according to a report from the National Council on Compensation Insurance. According to the report, "cordless tools... reduce the incidences of tripping over cords [and] contribute to decreased frequency of accidents."

"Without a doubt, cordless tools do help reduce trips and falls, entanglements, and electrocution injuries," says Mark Kinsey of PKG Insurance Associates. "Additionally, we believe it would make sense for the insurance industry to take this under consideration when writing insurance policies." [Source: *Rural Builder*, March 2006, p12]

### Technology Turns Contaminated Sediment into Useful Product

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is developing new technologies that can turn contaminated river and harbor sediments into useful products, such as building materials or soil for landscaping. According to a recent press release, one technology uses water under high pressure and biodegradable detergents to strip away contaminants and leave behind soil that can be blended with compost or yard waste to produce high quality top soil. Other uses could include construction-grade cement, lightweight aggregate, composite bricks and structural fill. Another technology heats up sediment to 2600° F and blends it with cement. The technologies are part of a demonstration program to decontaminate dredged materials from the Port of New York and New Jersey. The program is being funded and implemented by EPA and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), with the ultimate goal of creating a self-sustaining industry that uses treated dredged sediments as building material. [Source: Toolbase E-News, [www.toolbase.org](http://www.toolbase.org)]

### Builder Confidence Declines In May

Rising mortgage rates, deepening affordability issues and the retreat of investors/speculators from the marketplace are prompting single-family home builders to further adjust their perspectives on the new-home market, according to the National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI) for May, released on May 15. The HMI declined six points from an upwardly revised reading in the previous month to hit 45 for the latest report, its lowest mark since mid-1995.

"Based on historical experience, particularly the 1994-1995 episode, the pattern of movement in the HMI is not inconsistent with the orderly cooling-down process we're projecting for home sales and single-family housing starts in 2006," said NAHB Chief Economist David Seiders. "We expect new-home sales to be off by 12 percent from the record posted in 2005. Single-family starts, supported by large builder backlogs of unfilled orders and reconstruction in the wake of last year's record-breaking hurricane season, should be down by about 7 percent from the 2005 record."

The decline in builder confidence was broad-based and registered in every region this month. [Source: NAHB Press Release, 5/15/06, [www.nahb.org](http://www.nahb.org)]**SBC**

Email ideas for this department to [builderbanter@sbcmag.info](mailto:builderbanter@sbcmag.info).

### Housing Market Index 2005-06 (HMI)

The HMI is a weighted, seasonally adjusted statistic derived from ratings for present single family sales, single family sales in the next 6 months and buyers traffic. The first two components are measured on a scale of "good" "fair," and "poor," and the last one is measured on a scale of "high," "average" and "low." A rating of 50 indicates that the number of positive or good responses received from the builders is about the same as the number of negative or poor responses. Ratings higher than 50 indicate more positive or good responses.

Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan06	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July
67	65	68	61	57	57	56	54	51	46(r)	42	39

Source: National Association of Home Builders

# 7th Annual WTCA Membership Drive

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—Yogi Berra

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for details and the current standings!

*"It seems as though everyone at WTCA is headed for a common goal and is doing more (far more) for the advancement of the industry than any company or group of companies could ever do on their own."*

—Keith Cresotti, President, NU-Truss, Inc., Westfield, MA

Will it be a 3-peat for Texas, or will someone else take the lead? Don't wait...

# Start recruiting today!

For more information, contact Anna at 608/310-6719 or [astamm@qualtim.com](mailto:astamm@qualtim.com).



For more information about WTCA Chapters and how to become more involved, contact Anna L. Stamm (608/310-6719 or [astamm@qualtim.com](mailto:astamm@qualtim.com)) or Danielle Bothun (608/310-6735 or [dbothun@qualtim.com](mailto:dbothun@qualtim.com)). Contributions to Chapter Corner, including pictures, are encouraged. Submissions may be edited for grammar, length and clarity.



## Chapter Spotlight

### Checking in with the Western Chapter

by Anna L. Stamm

Two years ago this month, the "Oregon Chapter" held a kick-off meeting that drew an impressive crowd of area manufacturers and suppliers. By July 2004, they had an agenda of issues to tackle and a new name: Western Component Manufacturers Association (WCMA). Since then, the WCMA has been recognized by the WTCA Board of Directors as the 32nd Chapter of WTCA. So what is it up to lately? Lots!

### Membership Development

With assistance from staff, a newsletter was created to promote WCMA membership and participation. In conjunction with the May 18 chapter meeting, this full-color newsletter was mailed to all members and potential members in Oregon and southern Washington.



### Education

WCMA has conducted several seminars and expects to hold many more. The list includes: a permanent bracing seminar for the City of Hillsboro, a truss inspection seminar for the Oregon Building Officials Association (OBOA), a truss plant tour for the U.S. Fire Administration in cooperation with AF&PA and WTCA, and a meeting on manufacturing quality criteria for the City of Portland.

Want to know more? Check out the newsletter posted online at the chapter's page on the WTCA website: [www.sbcindustry.com/wcma.php](http://www.sbcindustry.com/wcma.php). Would you like help producing a similar newsletter for your chapter? Just let us know! **SBC**

[www.sbcindustry.com/chapters.php](http://www.sbcindustry.com/chapters.php)

## Chapter Highlights

### Iowa Truss Manufacturers Association

The Iowa Chapter held its annual legislative meeting on March 20 welcoming State Senator Tom Hancock and State Representative Sandra Greiner. This provided the membership with an excellent opportunity to engage Sen. Hancock and Rep. Greiner on issues of concern to our industry presently under some form of discussion in the state legislature including: notice and opportunity to repair, security bonding for remodeling contractors, eminent domain, state building codes, construction contracts, subdivision names and the Fire Code Advisory Committee on which the chapter is recognized as a party of legitimate interest. It was also noted that recent educational opportunities with the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau are due in large part to Sen. Hancock's efforts. The next chapter meeting will be held in conjunction with the annual golf outing on June 7. The chapter will also hold a lunch meeting at BCMC in Houston on October 5.

### Northwest Truss Fabricators Association

At its May board meeting, the Northwest Chapter elected new officers: Dave Houchin of Lumbermen's/Truss-Span moved into the role of President, Stan Dickhoff of Tri-County Truss is Vice President and David Motter of Tri-County Truss remains Treasurer. The board members discussed chapter business matters, the softwood lumber agreement and an inquiry from the City of Seattle on a truss certification program. The next chapter event will be the annual golf tournament at Harbour Pointe on July 11.

### South Florida WTCA

Many new things are brewing for the South Florida Chapter this year. At its April board meeting, a new schedule of meeting every other month was adopted. Members will assess the benefits of moving from monthly to bimonthly meetings and determine if they will continue with the new schedule next year. In honor of the chapter's new name, the board members agreed to hold a contest to solicit designs for a new chapter logo. The former South Florida Truss & Component Manufacturers Association needs a fresh look to go with its updated name, and the winning designer will receive a jacket with the new logo embroidered on it. The contest was held in May and the winner will be announced at the July 20 chapter meeting. Also in May, all chapter members were encouraged to attend the Florida Chapters meeting with guest speaker WTCA Legal Counsel Kent Pagel, sponsored jointly by all five Florida Chapters and held in Orlando.

### Truss Manufacturers Association of Texas

Despite the rain, Texas Chapter members turned out for the April golf tournament in Austin. Once again, the associate members came through with their terrific support of the chapter by providing door prizes, hole sponsorships and the bar tab. Chapter President Ben Doyle sent a letter of thanks to all members and attendees reminding them to recognize the chapter's associate sponsors with their patronage. The

Continued on page 102



# Calendar of Events

Check out WTCA's web site at [www.sbcindustry.com](http://www.sbcindustry.com) for the most current calendar information.

## June

- **15:** Truss Manufacturers Association of Texas (TMAT) Chapter Meeting, Cool River Restaurant in Austin. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or [astamm@qualtim.com](mailto:astamm@qualtim.com).
- **20:** South Carolina Component Manufacturers Association (SCCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or [astamm@qualtim.com](mailto:astamm@qualtim.com).
- **21:** Wood Truss Council of North Carolina (WTCNC) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or [astamm@qualtim.com](mailto:astamm@qualtim.com).

## July

- **11:** Northwest Truss Fabricators Association (NWTF) Chapter Meeting and Golf Tournament, Harbour Pointe Golf Club, Mukilteo, WA. For more information, contact Laurie Motter at [ldmotter@juno.com](mailto:ldmotter@juno.com).
- **12:** Southwest Florida Truss Manufacturers Association (SWFTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Jim Swain at 239/437-1100 or [jimsw@carpentercontractors.com](mailto:jimsw@carpentercontractors.com).
- **13:** Alabama Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or [dbothun@qualtim.com](mailto:dbothun@qualtim.com).
- **18:** Central Florida Component Manufacturers Association (CFCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or [dbothun@qualtim.com](mailto:dbothun@qualtim.com).
- **18:** Tennessee Truss Manufacturers Association (TTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Jerry Robertson at 931/645-3324 or [orgaintruss@earthlink.net](mailto:orgaintruss@earthlink.net).
- **19:** WTCA-Arizona Chapter Meeting. For details, contact Chapter President Chad Lilleberg at 623/931-3661 or [clilleberg@schuckaz.com](mailto:clilleberg@schuckaz.com).
- **19:** WTCA-Northeast Chapter Meeting, Holiday Inn Worcester, MA. For details, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or [astamm@qualtim.com](mailto:astamm@qualtim.com).

- **20:** North Florida Component Manufacturers Association (NFCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or [astamm@qualtim.com](mailto:astamm@qualtim.com).
- **20:** South Florida WTCA (SFCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or [dbothun@qualtim.com](mailto:dbothun@qualtim.com).
- **20:** Southern Nevada Component Manufacturers Association (SNCMA) Chapter Meeting, Memphis Championship Barbeque at 1401 South Rainbow Blvd, Las Vegas, NV. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or [astamm@qualtim.com](mailto:astamm@qualtim.com).
- **20:** WTCA-New York Chapter Meeting, NOLA Educational Center, Rensselaer, NY. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or [astamm@qualtim.com](mailto:astamm@qualtim.com).
- **25:** Mid South Component Manufacturers Association (MSCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or [dbothun@qualtim.com](mailto:dbothun@qualtim.com).
- **26:** Georgia Component Manufacturers Association (GCMA) Chapter Meeting. (Date changed from July 11.) For details, contact Chapter President Bob Burkett at 770/534-0364 or [bob.burkett@gamtn.com](mailto:bob.burkett@gamtn.com).

## August

- **2-4:** WTCA Open Quarterly Meeting, San Diego, CA. Contact Stephanie at 608/310-3721 or [swatrud@qualtim.com](mailto:swatrud@qualtim.com). All are welcome.
- **9:** Southwest Florida Truss Manufacturers Association (SWFTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Jim Swain at 239/437-1100 or [jimsw@carpentercontractors.com](mailto:jimsw@carpentercontractors.com).
- **10:** West Florida Truss Association (WFTA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Rick Cashman at 727/585-2067 or [rcashman@ffptruss.com](mailto:rcashman@ffptruss.com).
- **10:** Wisconsin Truss Manufacturers Association (WTMA) Chapter Meeting. For details, contact Chapter President Gene Geurts at 920/336-9400 or [ggeurts@richcostr.com](mailto:ggeurts@richcostr.com). **SBC**



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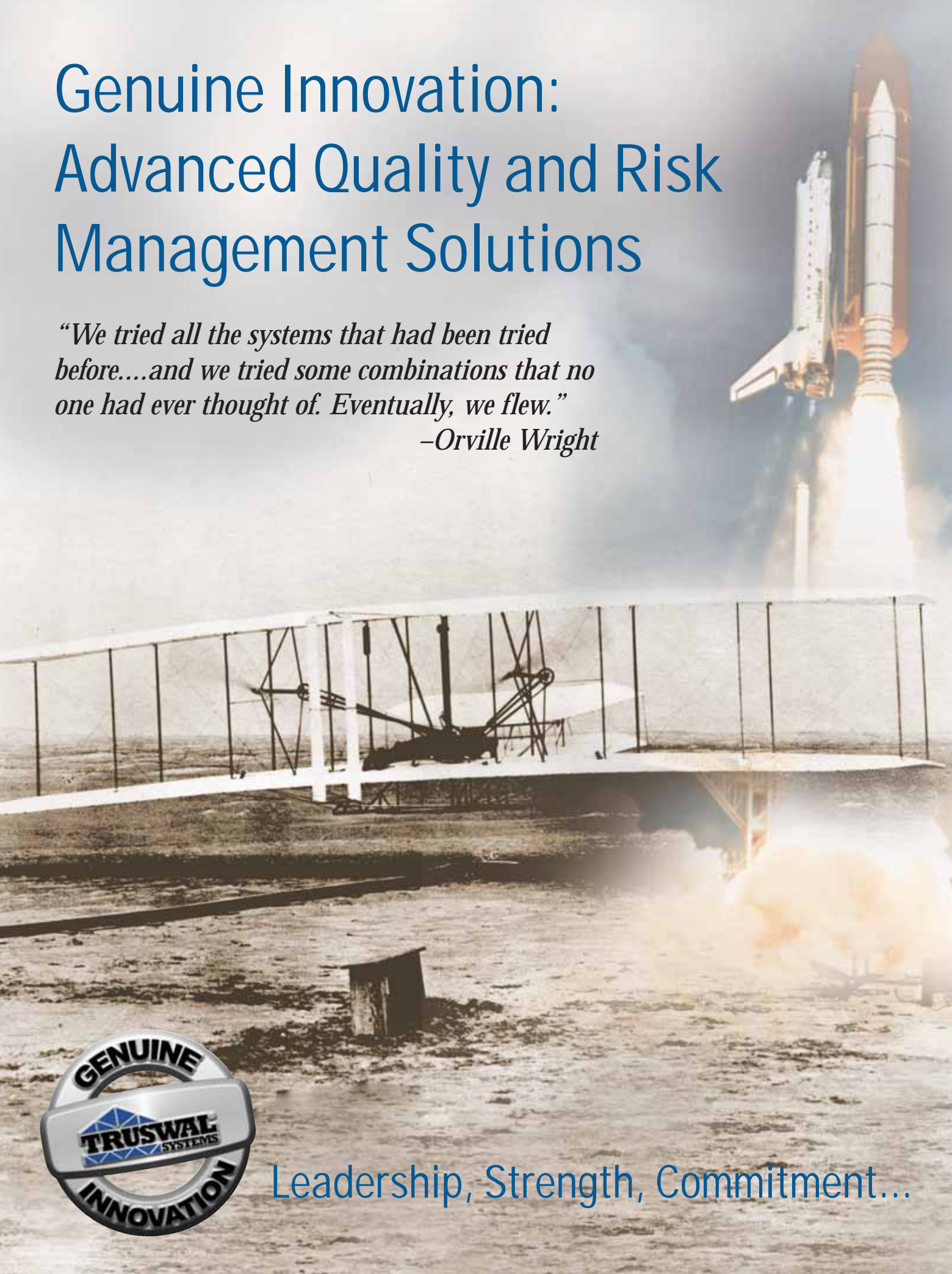


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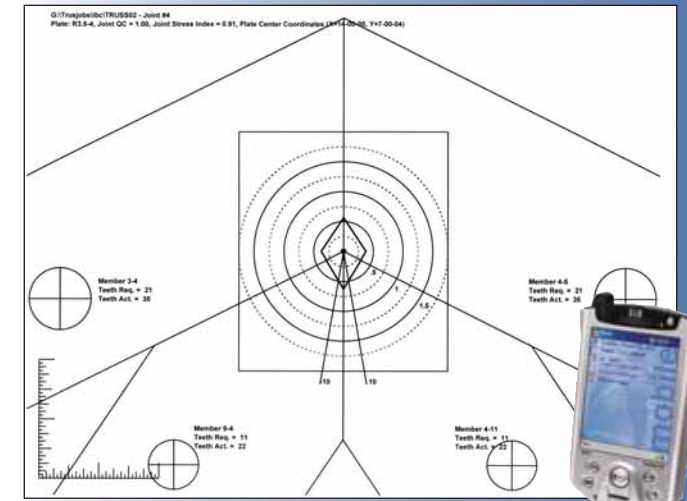
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## Consumer Price Index

[an index measuring the change in the cost of typical wage-earner purchases of goods and services expressed as a percentage of the cost of these same goods and services in some base period - called also cost-of-living index]

Expenditure Category	Changes from Preceding Mo.			Compound annual rate 3-mo. ended June 06
	Apr	May	June	
All Items	.6	.4	.2	5.1
All Items Less Food & Enery	.3	.3	.3	3.6

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Unemployment Rate

Mar	4.7%
Apr	4.7%
May	4.6%
June	4.6%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Producer Price Index - Customized Industry Data

An inflationary indicator published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to evaluate wholesale price levels in the economy.

Engineered Wood Mem. (exc. truss) Mfg.	Apr	May	June	Truss Mfg.	Apr	May	June
Eng. Wood Mem.	119.6(P)	119.8(P)	118.6(P)	Truss Mfg.	121.0(P)	121.0(P)	120.3(P)
LVL	126.4(P)	126.4(P)	126.4(P)	Wood Trusses	118.7(P)	118.6(P)	117.9(P)
Other	122.0(P)	122.3(P)	120.6(P)	Primary Products	118.7(P)	118.6(P)	117.9(P)
				Secondary Products	106.8(P)	108.2(P)	104.6(P)

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Producer Price Index General

% changes in selected stage-of-processing price indexes

Month	Total	Ex. Food & Energy
Mar	0.4(r)	0.2(r)
Apr	0.9	0.1
May	0.2	0.3
June	0.5	0.2

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Consumer Confidence Index

The Consumer Confidence Index is a measure of consumer optimism toward current economic conditions. The consumer confidence index was arbitrarily set at 100 in 1985 and is adjusted monthly on the basis of a survey of consumers.

The index considers consumer opinion on both current conditions (40%) and future expectations (60%).

Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan06	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	% +/-
85.2	98.9	103.8	106.8	102.7	107.5	109.6	104.7	105.7	0.9%

Source: [www.consumerresearchcenter.org](http://www.consumerresearchcenter.org)

## APRIL 2006 ISM BUSINESS SURVEY AT A GLANCE

	Series Index	Direction Apr vs Mar	Rate of Change Apr vs Mar
ISM Manufacturing Index (formerly PMI)	57.3	Growing	Faster
New Orders	57.6	Growing	Slower
Production	60.4	Growing	Faster
Employment	55.8	Growing	Faster
Supplier Deliveries	57.7	Slowing	Faster
Inventories	51.3	Growing	From Contracting
Customers' Inventories	46.5	Too Low	Faster
Prices	71.5	Increasing	Faster
Backlog of Orders	57.0	Growing	Slower
Exports	53.4	Growing	Slower
Imports	59.0	Growing	Faster

For an in-depth explanation of this summary, go to [www.ism.ws/ISMReport/](http://www.ism.ws/ISMReport/)

## Industrial Production Index

The industrial production (IP) index measures the change in output in U.S. manufacturing, mining, and electric and gas utilities. Output refers to the physical quantity of items produced, unlike sales value which combines quantity and price. The index covers the production of goods and power for domestic sales in the United States and for export. It excludes production in the agriculture, construction, transportation, communication, trade, finance, and service industries; government output, and imports. The IP index is developed by weighting each component according to its relative importance in the base period. The information for weights is obtained from the value added measures of production in the economic censuses of manufacturer and minerals industries, and from value added information for the utility industries in Internal Revenue Service statistics of income data. The weights are updated at five-year intervals to coincide with the economic censuses. The current index base year is 1992. (r=revised)

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Industrial Production Total Index (% change)	0.5(r)	0.8	0.1	0.8
Capacity Utilization Total Industry (%)	81.3(r)	81.9	81.8	82.4

Source: Federal Reserve Board

## Announcements

### WTCA SECURES APPOINTMENT TO INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE STRUCTURAL COMMITTEE

On April 24, WTCA was pleased to receive a letter from the International Codes Council asking Executive Director Kirk Grundahl to serve on the International Building Code (IBC) Structural Committee from July 1, 2006 to December 31, 2007. Grundahl also served on this committee for the 2005/2006 Code Development Cycle.

"WTCA's ongoing participation in the ICC process will continue to strengthen our industry's knowledge about code issues as well as our presence in the building code arena, which will have long-term benefits," stated WTCA President Don Groom of Stark Truss Company in Canton, OH. "In general, increased interest and involvement by component manufacturers in code issues—from the local to the international level—will ensure that structural building components are well-represented as codes are developed and implemented."

ICC Committees are the foundation upon which the system of the ICC International Codes ("I-Codes"), standards and related services are built. This appointment reflects the IBC Council's expectation and belief that WTCA's participation will make a significant contribution to the success of the committee.

The 2006/2007 Code Development Hearings are scheduled for September 20-30, 2006 in Lake Buena Vista, FL. For more information about WTCA's involvement with this committee, please email [codes@sbcmag.com](mailto:codes@sbcmag.com) or call 608/274-4849.

### NEW ADDITIONS AT WEIMA AMERICA, INC.

WEIMA America recently introduced two new Sales Managers. Effective February 2006, WEIMA welcomes Dan Sanford and Ben Buchsieb to the sales team. Dan who lives in Minnesota is our Regional Sales Manager for the Central Region of the United States and Canada, while Ben who lives in Arizona is our Regional Sales Manager for the Western Region of the United States and Canada. 802-7170. [Source: Press Release, 5/10/06. For reader service, go to [www.sbcmag.info/weima.htm](http://www.sbcmag.info/weima.htm).]



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### WEYERHAEUSER COMPANY LAUNCHES iLEVEL™

On April 20, Weyerhaeuser Company announced the consolidation of five separate operating units into a single, unified business—iLevel™ by Weyerhaeuser. iLevel™ represents a new, business model for the residential structural frame industry, combining Weyerhaeuser's products and services, distribution network and proprietary design software. Established Weyerhaeuser products and services—Trus Joist®, Strukturwood®, plywood, lumber, and distribution—will become part of iLevel™. Together, these businesses represent more than one-third of Weyerhaeuser's \$22.6 billion in company-wide revenue. [Source: Press Release, 4/20/06]

## News

### ENGINEERS TO SEISMIC TEST WOOD TOWNHOUSE

University of Buffalo engineers are beginning unprecedented seismic tests on a full-scale, three-bedroom, wood-frame townhouse. The 73,000-pound, 1,800-square-foot house—the largest wooden structure to ever be involved in such testing in the United States—will undergo a series of tests that culminate in November with the most violent shaking possible in a laboratory, mimicking an earthquake that occurs only once every 2,500 years.

The landmark testing at UB's Structural Engineering and Earthquake Simulation Laboratory is part of a \$1.4 million international project called NEESWood, funded by the National Science Foundation. To gather data, researchers are equipping the townhouse with 250 sensors and an extensive array of video cameras that will provide detailed information about how each area behaves during each simulated earthquake.

The research is based on the premise that if more were known about how wood structures react to earthquakes, then larger and taller structures could be built in seismic regions, providing economic, engineering and societal benefits. Wood-frame construction accounts for 80 percent to 90 percent of all U.S. structures, but fewer than 10 percent of civil-engineering students are required to study wood design. [Source: [science.monstersandcritics.com](http://science.monstersandcritics.com), 5/5/06] SBC

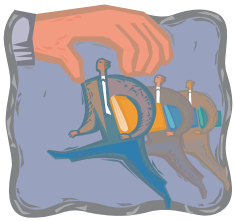
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### Chapter Corner

Continued from page 96

next chapter function will be the annual membership meeting at the Cool River Café in Austin on June 15.

### WTCA - New York

The theme for the New York Chapter this year is education. At its April meeting, members discussed all of the educational presentations being put on by the chapter for building officials. Each is receiving raves and precipitating requests for more. The groups with which the chapter is working to date include: Southern Tier Building Officials Association, Finger Lakes Building Officials Association, Rockland County Chapter of Building Officials and Fire Inspectors and the Capital District Conference. The chapter donated \$1000 to the Carbeck Structural Components Institute again this year and is eager to begin distributing the newly updated CD, *Wood Truss Construction and Fire Performance*. Members were able to review portions of the CD at the meeting, including the new sections on building labeling.

### WTCA - Northeast

The Northeast Chapter has been very active this year confronting building labeling challenges in Massachusetts and Maine (see the article on page 74). The status of these challenges was discussed in depth at the chapter meeting in April. In addition, members reviewed the new Carbeck CD on Wood Truss Construction and Fire Performance. It was agreed that the chapter would donate \$1000 to Carbeck and begin distributing the CDs. Also on the educational front, planning has begun on the chapter's educational presentations this year, specifically for U-Mass, Sturbridge and NRLA events. The next chapter meeting will also be educational for component manufacturers—together with the New York Chapter, the Northeast Chapter will host WTCA Legal Counsel Kent Pagel for his presentation on Successfully Negotiating an Acceptable Customer Contract. This joint Northeast/New York Chapter meeting will be held in Springfield, MA on July 19. **SBC**

For more information, about WTCA Chapters, contact Anna L. Stamm (608/310-6719 or [astamm@qualtim.com](mailto:astamm@qualtim.com)) or Danielle Bothun (608/310-6735 or [dbothun@qualtim.com](mailto:dbothun@qualtim.com)). Contributions to Chapter Corner, including pictures, are encouraged. Submissions may be edited for grammar, length and clarity.

# TECHNICAL NOTES



Clarify code issues and help educate your market with *WTCA Technical Notes*. Developed in partnership with WTCA Chapters, *Tech Notes* address pertinent issues and offer position statements on some of the most frequently asked questions that component manufacturers face on a daily basis.

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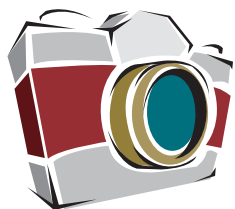
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## Parting Shots

Share your stories and photos with us! Send submissions to [partingshots@sbcmag.info](mailto:partingshots@sbcmag.info).



One way to ensure a strong workforce in the future is to help create one from the beginning. As noted in this issue's Workforce Development column on page 36, Chambers Truss has been involved in training students at a local high school. They have donated equipment such as plotters and printers to the school. Pictured here is Chambers Truss President Bob Becht using WTCA's B2 Summary Sheet on Truss Installation and Temporary Bracing to apply bracing to the model houses the students are building. By learning about component construction and bracing, these students may have a future in the industry. For the rest of the story, tune into the November issue of *SBC Magazine* for a full article on Chambers Truss' workforce development program! **SBC**



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# "SIX MILES OF FLOORS A WEEK... WITH ONE WEB SAW!"



ALPINE **WEBPRO**

I spent a considerable amount of time researching each of the floor web saws on the market. I evaluated them according to:

- Price/value
- Manufacturer's ability to support their product
- Simplicity of design and operation
- Flexibility in cutting and total output
- Safety features

On paper, the WebPro appeared to be a good value, so I visited several plants that had been running their WebPro Saws for a number of years. The operators and maintenance people were very satisfied with the overall performance of their saws.

We installed our WebPro in May 2003. I can best summarize our level of satisfaction by saying that this one saw currently supports two 10-hour production shifts six days a week. During our busiest season from April through December, we average over 5,200 lineal feet of floor production each day.

The WebPro has performed extremely well in each of the five areas I consider of the highest importance.

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**Mike Hotopp**  
Operations Manager  
Tempo Components  
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*Mike Hotopp*



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